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# The Art of Betty Goodwin

## SPONSOR'S FOREWORD

Betty Goodwin is one of Canada's most respected contemporary artists. Over a career that spans several decades, viewers have been moved by her highly evocative and innovative use of drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture to express the human condition.

The Fraser Elliott Foundation is pleased to sponsor this book, which celebrates Betty Goodwin's remarkable contribution to Canadian art. Here we have the studio life of the artist and her œuvre brought together in one volume by distinguished writers, critics and peers. Here we acknowledge the Art Gallery of Ontario's collection of Betty Goodwin's works, now the largest public holding and the study centre for her art. Here, too, we present the second in a series of books published through the ongoing sponsorship of The Fraser Elliott Foundation, highlighting the work of major Canadian artists in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

We congratulate the artist, Betty Goodwin, and the Art Gallery of Ontario for bringing this project to fruition. We acknowledge with pride the significant contributions made by writer Anne Michaels, Art Gallery of Ontario Director Matthew Teitelbaum and Curator of Contemporary Art Jessica Bradley, researcher Anne-Marie Ninacs, and artist and writer Rober Racine. With this memorable book, they have renewed the standards for quality and innovation in art publishing in Canada.

*R. Fraser Elliott*

The Fraser Elliott Foundation

March 1998







# The Art of Betty Goodwin

*Edited by*

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*Introduction by*

ANNE MICHAELS

*Essay by*

MATTHEW TEITELBAUM

*Interview by*

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*Afterword by*

ROBER RACINE

*Chronology by*

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Douglas & McIntyre / Vancouver and Toronto  
Art Gallery of Ontario / Toronto



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This book is published on the occasion of *The Art of Betty Goodwin*, the exhibition organized and circulated by the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and sponsored by Heenan Blaikie, with the support of The Fraser Elliott Foundation.

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*frontispiece:*

**Triptych**, 1986

Mixed media on paper

218 x 96; 226.5 x 96; 227 x 96

*Frum Collection, Toronto*

*Photo by Brian Merrett,*

*courtesy Montreal Museum of*

*Fine Arts*

*page vi:*

**Untitled (Moving Towards  
Fire)**, 1985

Graphite, oil and oil stick on  
wove paper

75.2 x 50.7

*Art Gallery of Ontario*



BETTY GOODWIN DEDICATES

*The Art of Betty Goodwin*

TO MARTIN GOODWIN







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## Director's Foreword

Betty Goodwin's studies of the body and all that it comes into contact with are highly compelling testaments to human suffering, longing and identity. In this publication and the exhibition it commemorates we learn about the span of her career, from the 1950s in Montreal to today, the ways in which personal experience determined the course of her art, and the relationship between the technical and formal properties of her work.

It is a pleasure to thank my colleague, Jessica Bradley, the Art Gallery of Ontario's Curator of Contemporary Art, whose work with Goodwin over many years has informed the project at every turn. Jessica and I have worked closely to build an unparalleled collection of more than 170 drawings and prints for the Art Gallery of Ontario's permanent collection, with the generous support of both Betty and Martin Goodwin, and the Volunteers of the Art Gallery of Ontario in celebration of their fiftieth anniversary. This publication is directly linked to this far-reaching collection.

I am deeply grateful also for the support of The Fraser Elliott Foundation in making this publication possible. The Foundation is joined in its support of the Art Gallery of Ontario by the law firm of Heenan Blaikie, which generously sponsored the exhibition *The Art of Betty Goodwin*. At the centre of it all is Betty Goodwin, whose remarkable achievement and enduring spirit have made this all possible.

*Matthew Teitelbaum*  
Director  
Art Gallery of Ontario



# Acknowledgements

More than four years ago, the Art Gallery of Ontario committed to the rigorous process of building in-depth core collections devoted to senior Canadian artists. Betty Goodwin was in our first thoughts.

We could not have realized the breadth of our ambition for the collection, the exhibition and this publication, which documents her long and remarkable career, without Betty's enthusiastic and warm support.

At the Art Gallery of Ontario many staff members have insured this project's success. An undertaking of this scope involves every department in the Gallery, and the contributions that so many made to the fullness and breadth of our undertaking is a testament to the professionalism of Gallery staff and their high regard for Betty's work. We salute and thank the staff of the Conservation, Registration, Design, Exhibition and Technical Services departments for their care and commitment. Jill Cuthbertson, Myron Jones, George Bartosik, Margaret Haupt, Paul Wilson, Louise de Filippis, Michelle Jacques, Bryan Gee, Jim Bourke, Steven Fong, Curtis Strilchuk, Barry Simpson, and John O'Leary attended to details large and small, and have made a notable difference in the success of the project.

Various people contributed to this publication with their focussed and often inspiring work. Anne Michaels and Rober Racine contributed energizing texts, while Anne-Marie Ninacs created a remarkable chronology of Betty's life from wide-ranging documentary material, developing the first complete bibliography of the artist's work. We both recall with

1875



pleasure Anne-Marie's excitement as new information was identified and confirmed. She brought the highest of standards to her project and added immeasurably to the texture of this publication. Research on Betty Goodwin's early work was greatly enhanced by the contributions of Professor Rose-Marie Arbour of Université de Québec à Montréal and Professor Francois-Marc Gagnon of Université de Montréal. At the Gallery, Laura Brown and Georgiana Uhlyarik provided invaluable research assistance in various important ways, particularly in the picture research completed for this publication.

Achieving coherence between texts in this publication, while insuring the presence of disparate voices, was a Herculean task. We were grateful at every turn for the care, professionalism and remarkable insight Sarah Milroy brought to this book. We will always be in her debt for her professional seriousness and personal grace. Barbara Hodgson designed this publication with great style and an unerring sense of the relation of text to image.

Roger Bellemare shared a knowledge of Betty and her work which comes from the depths of their long friendship and respect for each other as artists as much as it does from Roger's brief but crucial engagement with Betty as her first private gallery representative. We are grateful to him. At crucial points in our work Jared Sable, René Blouin and Martin Goodwin provided important support and encouragement. Betty couldn't have three more committed advocates. They are unwavering in their love for her, and were key players in all aspects of this project's development. Scott McMorran, Betty Goodwin's studio assistant, contributed to every stage of this exhibition. His generosity of spirit and quiet efficiency were a gift.

A small group of works from private collections enormously enriched the exhibition, which this publication celebrates. We are grateful for the enthusiastic participation of Bruce Bailey, Murray Frum, Paul and Marielle Mailhot and Alison and Alan Schwartz who, along with Betty and Martin Goodwin, have generously lent key works from their collections. We also acknowledge with gratitude the gifts of work by Betty Goodwin to the Gallery in recent years by Ron Rosenes, Ron Kaplansky, Morris and Vivian Saffer and Alan and Alison Schwartz.

To work closely with an artist on a project for three years is rewarding beyond measure. To engage with the work of an artist across all periods of his or her artistic life is to take on a responsibility we were mindful of at every stage. It was a remarkable privilege to have such an opportunity to learn. We felt it every day.

*Jessica Bradley and Matthew Teitelbaum*

**Spine III, 1994**

Steel rod, plaster, wax and wire

approx. 214.6 x 6.3

*Collection of Michael and*

*Sonja Koerner*

*Photo by Sean Weaver*





## INTRODUCTION

# This Remembering

*by Anne Michaels*

LIMBS THAT HAVE LOST THE GROUND. BONE AND WIRE, CARBON AND BLOOD.

Betty Goodwin annihilates metaphor. Bone is bone. An object once held or worn by a loved one who's lost to us is not a metaphor for the absent body, it does not stand in for the body, it is itself: a remnant, the artifact left behind, a trace. We are left with possessions, clothes that will never again be worn by their owner, forsaken. Goodwin's series of vests, lovingly rendered, soft-ground etchings made from actual garments pressed into copper plates and reworked again and again; this is the raw struggle of love trying to break free of loss. How does love leave its mark? Memory, possessions, a taste, an imprint on flesh . . . a vow.

Her figures are profoundly homeless, in a terrible exile, with nothing but their nakedness. One thinks of Rilke's heartbreaking "Autumn Day": "Whoever has no house now, will never have one. / Whoever is alone will stay alone . . ." It is a place of complex transformation—through terror, panic, resignation, desire. In *Moving Towards Fire* (1985), the burning bodies are turning to carbon, passing from one state of being into the next. Her figures exist in a zone without landscape; they float or climb, sink or swim, in a featureless geography, forlorn purgatory-like characters in the work of Samuel Beckett, a writer Goodwin has quoted in her drawings. Without a defined landscape, we must imagine the element her figures inhabit—water or embalming fluid, darkness or ether, an interrogation room, a cell. Their loss is timeless, universal, a country unto itself. What has been left behind is also what they carry: their longing, what they love. In *Rooted Like a Wedge* (which takes its

Untitled (*La mémoire du corps*), 1991

Pastel and graphite on mylar

50 x 30

*Art Gallery of Ontario*



*this page and facing page:*

**The Weight of Memory,**

1997

Oil stick and graphite on

mylar, steel and stones

20 x 23,8 x 10 each

*Private Collections*

*Photos courtesy Galerie René*

*Blouin, Montreal*





title from Artaud: “from this pain rooted in me like a wedge”), the face of the figure is almost erased, while the pain enters where we might expect it to, between the ribs, a black triangle pointing to the heart. At the bottom of the drawing lies the small pale triangle of self that has been lost. Her figures strain to rejoin the world—as in her series *Figure/Ladder XVIII-XXIII* (1996–1997), where, as Goodwin has said of her figures in general: “They are as a group struggling one against the other and at the same time tied up together in the same situation.” Many of her drawings seem steeped in silence, as if her figures have been retrieved from somewhere so deep in the folds of experience that their cries have long preceded them, have long since faded.

There is the motif of the severed head—*Figure Losing Energy* (1988), *Carbon* (1986), *Untitled* (1987–1988)—as Goodwin says, “a figure whose head flies off because of the difficulty of certain thoughts or issues.” There are her Swimmers, who are in an element in which they would suffocate, and so are, as Goodwin says, “forced to seek air.” In her Swimmers series, the figures are frail, almost ghostly; almost as if surrounded by their own spirit. In later series, the figures are dense, heavy. The denser the flesh, the deeper the spirit has moved inside, an invisible frailty far more complex and urgent. In *Carbon* (1986), the spirit that seems to be departing the body is humanly heavy, not free of gravity. In *Two Figures with Metal Shelf* (1985–1987) and in *Triptych* (1986), a white figure—an angel or a nurse—waits by the head of each prostrate figure.

What seems at first to be a disturbing ambiguity in Goodwin’s work is actually an uncompromising precision: figures strain, but their strain is frozen into a kind of rigor mortis. The blood forest, the raw meat of *Nerves No. 14* (1994–1995), where it is not clear whether the body’s pain fertilizes the earth or whether the tendrils of roots and nerves nourish, like intravenous, the body. And of course, the central ambiguity at the heart of most of Goodwin’s works: are the figures half-alive or half-dead? The bitter humour in this question forces us to examine our beliefs. This is the question that makes her work so riveting, so intensely still. We hold our breath, looking.

Betty Goodwin’s work transforms the viewer into a witness. Her work is not a catalogue of distress. It is a record of hope in its most distilled form, potent and fiercely earned. Even the figures that are clearly corpses (though disturbingly too recent to have been buried)—in her series *The Weight of Memory*—are accompanied by handfuls of stones for remembrance, a traditional token left at a gravesite. The dead are remembered. Someone has remembered them.

Goodwin has made it her task to examine the most harrowing events of this century: the horrors of political repression, genocide. She shares the deep humanism of Terrence Des Pres, who has written: “. . . one thinks now of the survivor, not as an emblem or a symbol, but as he is, in rags and dirt, his face the face of anyone . . . and what his body says is that the human spirit can sink this low, can bear this torment, can suffer defilement and fear and unspeakable hardship and still exist. . . . To the new prisoners . . . a survivor spoke these words: ‘I strengthen you. . . . Now you may decide if you are justified in despairing.’”

Goodwin’s figures, struggling in an extremity of cruelty or loneliness, urge us to remember that even the necessities—breath and rest—are luxuries. To remember the hope that exists in the very fact



of existence. Again and again she brings her viewers to this remembering—in Betty Goodwin’s words: “to take one whole moment at a time: one full precious minute: one whole world: one lifetime.”

The strength of Goodwin’s vision, that she looks without turning away, compels us towards this essential miracle. Her pragmatism is not reductive—on the contrary. John Berger’s comment on the Russian artist Ernst Neizvestny in *Art and Revolution* could apply equally to Betty Goodwin: “What may . . . disturb . . . most is the fact that he appears so hard to frighten. He is not fearless; no man is. But, as a result of certain experiences he has continually worked upon his imagination so that they should never become diluted or disguised, he has remained the familiar of death. . . . It is *from* death he measures, instead of towards it.”

HOW DOES LOVE LEAVE ITS MARK? A VOW.





## ESSAY

# The Mourner's Cry

Some thoughts about the early work of Betty Goodwin

by Matthew Teitelbaum

I

Writing in his great book on photography, *Camera Lucida*, the French critic Roland Barthes recalled his experience of sifting through photographs of his mother after her death looking for an image to capture her “assertion of a gentleness.” He searched for the photograph not to come to the end of mourning, but to sustain it. To stay longer in that space allowed him to intensely remember the past and those he associated with it.

We mourn for that which is placed forever beyond our reach. By death. By displacement. Mostly by death. We mourn to ensure space for our feeling. We internalize the figure we mourn by how we remember, and we preserve our memories by conjuring up those we love through objects and images: gathering photographs, selecting keepsakes, making art. Mourning, in its completeness, is expressed by making the image, not by repressing it.

For almost fifty years, Betty Goodwin's art has expressed a passionate humanism which communicates suffering and its antidote, reparation, in every move and breath. Reviewing her work as a continuum, Goodwin's earliest paintings and related prints can be situated as the beginning of a sustained project, her early domestic still lifes and figurative works anticipating in spirit the ambition that follows. Her continuing use of the human figure invokes the act of memorialization: seeing, remembering, reflecting, mourning. At the centre of Goodwin's project as an artist—the subject for her art—lies the constant reminder of inexplicable events, events which elicit feelings so intense that the moorings to

Tarpaulin #10 (Passage for  
a Tall Thin Man), 1974–1991

Mixed media

289.9 x 94.9

*The Bailey Collection, Toronto*

*Photo courtesy Jack Shainman  
Gallery, New York*

which we attach our understanding of the world seem to have given way. We know this from what she represents: figures disembodied, suspended, held, released, erupting; figures grasped at as they float away.

This theme of mourning, rooted in a time-honoured figurative tradition, is deeply embedded in Goodwin's work. Mourning has an episodic quality, formed from disjunctive memories which cascade without heed to specific chronology. So too in Goodwin's art. She refrains from grounding her work in specific narratives of time and place that could describe actual events. Rather, she gives form to feelings which hover over everyday life as anxieties do. In effect, her art binds such feelings and unites fragments of consciousness that fail to cohere without her.

When seen together, Goodwin's work declares that the act of making art is the act of making something visible, of evoking that which threatens to disappear. This, perhaps, is the second link between her work as an artist and the work of mourning—the link between the enigmatic mark, which is the signature of her drawings, and the ambiguity of feeling occasioned when the sadness of mourning distorts time and memory. Her drawn line—erased, repositioned, set to paper with the varied pressure of her hand—seems always to be coming and returning to a place we cannot see beneath the surface of the paper itself. The pencil makes starts and stops, repeats itself to echo form, contrasting, as the state of mourning does, intense clarity with uncertainty. In Goodwin's art, the drawn line twists and turns like a kite between the rages and pleasures of life. Echoing the confusions of mourning, her scratched, rough line suggests the anxiety of reconstituting disparate memories into a coherent whole.

Throughout the years, Goodwin has suffered her own share of deep personal family loss. From such poignant experience, Goodwin has created images that reach across the divide of personal isolation. Her work is a process made clear; expressing feeling is a way of preserving and healing the self.

## II

At the centre of the experience of mourning in the Jewish tradition is the incantation of the Kaddish, the holiest of prayers. The Kaddish is recited as part of the funeral, at the burial services, every morning and night during the thirty-day mourning period which follows, and at specific times throughout the year when the dead are remembered. With its repeated lines proclaiming man's link to God through the sanctification of personal and communal values, it functions to restore a sense of order in the world and to bring humankind close to God in that moment following death when the survivor feels forsaken. This restoration of order, which is at the heart of the Kaddish, is rephrased at its end as a prayer for the restoration of the world to its original unity—that is, to the unity that death has torn apart. "May the maker of peace above us," the Kaddish proclaims, "also make peace among us."

The Kaddish turns the individual back to his community. In the spirit of Jewish tradition, into which Goodwin was born, mourning is constituted as a collective rather than a solitary act. Indeed, many of its component parts, including the Shiva (the gathering of mourners for prayer in the home of the deceased), are choreographed to bring mourners into contact with one another and, thus, to transform sadness through healing memories.



*this page:*

Käthe Kollwitz

**Das Volk (The People),**

1922–23

Woodcut on wove paper

68.1 x 48.9

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

**The Mourners, 1955**

Etching

14.3 x 27.1

*Art Gallery of Ontario*





The Mourners (1955)

No figure is alone. Metaphorically, and literally, the centre of the composition is the pair of clasped hands, hands that grasp one another to make a whole, to create a circle, echoing the other clasped hands in a repetition that joins the mourners in their grief. This is an image of communal grief in the Jewish tradition of shared memory, silently evoked. Realized in a manner that echoes Käthe Kollwitz's use of black, white and tones of gray, Goodwin's print also recalls Kollwitz's etched surface, replete with the history of its making. There is a connectedness in this space of mourning which is almost palpable, one body cascading into the next. Just as Kollwitz pictures a mother wresting a child from the arms of death, Goodwin's pictured grief lays bare the question: Can we be consoled?

Betty Goodwin's reflections on mourning, and the healing associated with it, are formed very much in this spirit of building connections. She enters the space of mourning not to *achieve* therapeutic resolution, but rather to work *towards* it. In this, she shares with a favourite writer, Elie Wiesel, a sense that the repeated actions of ritual provide comfort. A reader confronts a text he does not understand, Wiesel says in so many words, and repeats phrases in an effort to understand. Authors and artists do the same. Repetition is not so much penance, but shows a real and evident desire to move beyond anxiety and to search for solace. One enters into ritual repetition to achieve some connection with an empathetic listener. Mourning, much like the creative act, is about the desire to connect.

For Goodwin, the impulse towards repetition is expressed both in her tendency to generate works in series and in the repeated drawn lines which she uses to create form within her individual works. In *Porteur* (page 70), repetition suggests inner life. Arms that reach out to hold the central lifeless figure are drawn with repeated short lines, which are reiterated not simply to create the defined outline but to suggest the tidal inner life of the stretched and yearning body.

**The Park, 1950**

Charcoal and pastel on paper

52.6 x 57.3

Art Gallery of Ontario

### III

To date, Betty Goodwin's early years as an artist have been little remarked upon; they remain, it would seem, almost purposefully obscured. Much like the great German artist Joseph Beuys, whose example encouraged her, she has continually noted that her emergence as a serious artist was possible only by a return to the source of personal experience. This, in turn, allowed her a way to approach the larger issues of social and political rupture.

In Goodwin's account, she came to consciousness as an artist in the late 1960s, when her printmaking practice allowed her to locate and value a new subject: articles of personal clothing which were a part of her life. Her first truly meaningful series of work, she often remarks, was her series of men's vests, begun with abruptness following twenty years of creating domestic still lifes and figurative work. Fabric, thread and clothing patterns were markers in her childhood. Her father, who had trained as a tailor in Romania, had owned and operated a small contracting firm for vest-making in Montreal.

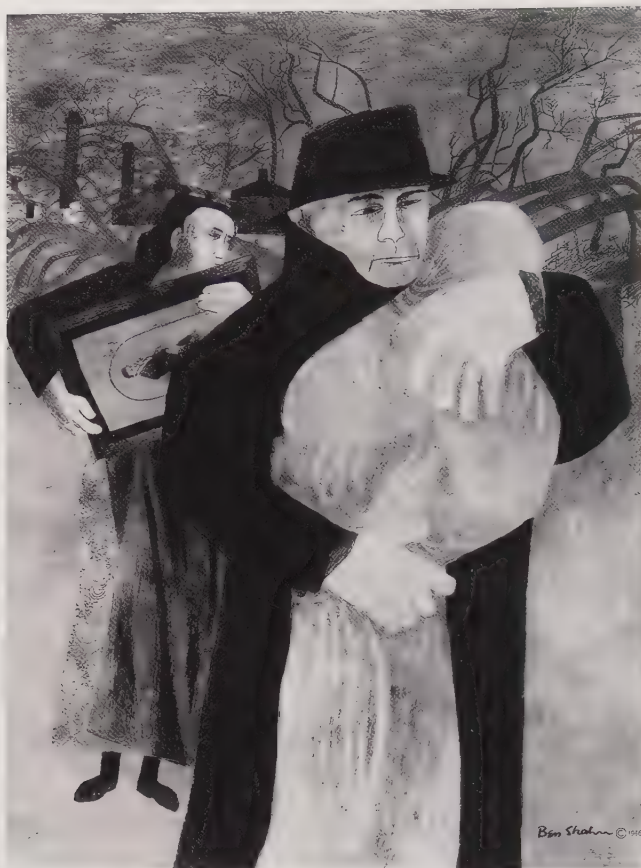
For Goodwin, vests, shirts, hats and gloves became the subject of a truly intense exploration of personal effects. Invested with personal meaning but not dependent upon such specifics to be meaningful, Goodwin believed that the work of 1969 and 1970 was, for the first time, truly her own. "Using the direct image of a vest," she wrote in 1992, "that was the beginning of a feeling that I had made some sort of connection." And yet from which part of Goodwin's own history did this connection emerge?

Goodwin had become a professional artist at the close of the Second World War. Like other artists of her generation looking for art's purpose, she wondered how to confront the devastation of a war that seemed inexplicable to her. From the mid-1930s onward, Social Realist artists in the United









*top:*

Ben Shahn

**Father and Child**, 1946

Tempera on cardboard

101.5 x 76.2

*The Museum of Modern Art,  
New York*

*bottom:*

William Gropper

**Tailor**, 1940

Oil on canvas

54.4 x 66.7

*Hirshhorn Museum and  
Sculpture Garden,  
Smithsonian Institution,  
Washington, D.C.*



States and Canada turned to the immediate world about them to establish a sense of possibility for the future. They did so through images infused with moral purpose. In Canada, a generation of Montreal artists—many were Jewish immigrants—developed a belief in the role of the artist as an advocate for social change.

The imagery and style of Montreal's Social Realist painters owed a great deal to American examples much published in art periodicals of the day. In Montreal, however, this tradition was linked to the specifics of locale. Mont Royal, a favourite leisure spot for immigrant communities, and the men and women of Mordecai Richler's now-famous St. Urbain Street, were the preferred subjects of artists such as Alfred Pinsky, Ghitta Caiserman and Jack Beder.

Like New York artist Ben Shahn, Goodwin and her contemporaries sought to make images that linked the individual to a collective purpose. The act of painting was, to them, an act of belonging, of implicating oneself in social change. Figures held placards in political demonstrations, gathered possessions and family as they moved from tenement to tenement, and huddled in small ghetto rooms plying their trade. Each artist in his or her own way acknowledged the continuing struggle of the worker. Where Regionalist artists in the United States such as Thomas Hart Benton celebrated the American myth of individualism (upholding fairness and diversity as the keystones of the American way of life), Shahn, William Gropper, the Soyer brothers and other artists working in large urban centres sought to highlight the political through images that directly questioned the inequities of American society. Such distinctions were not lost on Goodwin, Caiserman and their peers.

Montreal painting of the mid-1940s can be divided roughly into three camps: the Social Realists, the Automatistes and the formal painters of the "modern" landscape—figures such as Goodridge Roberts, Jacques de Tonnancour and John Lyman. Broadly sharing a belief in art as a search for meaning and order, the Automatistes and the Social Realists sought, through new imagery, to recover a purpose and pattern to life made uncertain by the savagery of war. Like the Abstract Expressionists in the United States, yet with a decidedly different cultural context for their production, the Automatistes—led by Paul-Émile Borduas—developed a manner of working that released unconscious gesture through abstract images. Previous systems of signs and images were seen to have failed to make the world more humane. In their work, and in their life-stance, the Automatistes sought to start the world anew, to establish direct action (the spontaneous gesture) as a means to combat the legacy of the war.

In a parallel manner, but through vastly different means, the Social Realists used the figure to show the pain and suffering of a generation through allegorical story-telling. Their images of men in soup kitchens, of women in lifeless factory work, of prisoners of war seeking escape, were realized to communicate the drama of life.



Paul-Émile Borduas

**Ardent chapelle**, 1954

Watercolour on paper

56.5 x 77.47

*Art Gallery of Ontario*





## Waiting (1950)

*We know it from the title: this is a picture of suspended time. The figures, though grouped together in a social space, are nonetheless mute. They seem old and dispossessed. In the tradition of Social Realist painting, dispossession is pictured not merely as a material fact; a future is mourned, a future no longer there for the taking. The close of the Second World War, and a full understanding of its carnage, had made this clear: if the war was the past, what future could there be? In *Waiting*, the nondescript articulation of the space—a bus station, a waiting room for immigrant services, a bench on a busy downtown street—allows us to conjecture: waiting to be met, waiting to move, waiting to connect. It poses a challenge to the idea of collective mourning, for it suggests that in the face of an inexplicable force, isolation presents itself as temporary solace, or perhaps all that can be borne. *Waiting* is a painting realized in the colours of shadows.*

*Waiting*, 1950

Oil and charcoal on paper

67.1 x 108.4

Art Gallery of Ontario

## IV

Through the first twenty years of her life as a professional artist (exhibiting, for the most part, with graphic arts societies and in nationally based juried exhibitions), Betty Goodwin worked in two casually connected media: painting and printmaking. From the start, her painting practice was resolutely representational. For two or three years at the turn of the 1950s, she painted in the Social Realist style. Works such as *The Park* and *Waiting* clearly aligned her with artists whose work reflected a concern with the social ills of their time.

Paintings such as *Carnival* and *Still Life* followed in the mid-1950s. Reflecting Goodwin's dominant interests of that period, which would prevail until the early 1960s, these works depict domestic environments in the style of then vogueish proto-Cubism—a manner of composing images that broke the various parts of the picture into bisecting planes. These planar divisions, no matter how mildly applied, evoke a flavour of modernity, particularly in the representation of the shifting planes of light and form within urban architecture.

Goodwin's paintings were given currency, no doubt, by critical writing of the late 1940s and early 1950s which declared, in the words of the American critic Clement Greenberg, that Cubism was "the only vital style of our time, the one best able to convey contemporary feeling, and the only one capable of supporting a tradition that will survive into the future and form new artists."

By late 1964, Goodwin had moved into what, in retrospect, we can understand as a final painting stage, influenced by a range of interests expressed up to that point only in her prints. In a new series of paintings and related works on paper exhibited in February of 1965 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Gallery XII (then a space devoted to younger artists), she showed work that was startlingly new. Figures were suspended on apparently fluid grounds, and the freedom of position (fig-





left:

**Still Life**, c. 1958

Oil on canvas

63 x 92

Photo courtesy Montreal

Museum of Fine Arts

right:

**Carnival**, c. 1958

Oil on canvas

71 x 90

Photo courtesy Montreal

Museum of Fine Arts

ures and objects released from their Cubist grid) suggest a release from both physical and psychic restraint. These works (page 90) were made in response to a reading of Chalom Anski's *The Dibbuk*, a story drawn from kabbalistic folklore which posits that, after death, a sinner's soul transmigrates into the body of a living person. Only by conjuring the divine name can the spirit be exorcised.

Goodwin's printmaking practice of the 1950s and 1960s followed a somewhat different path. Although her prints tied to explicitly Social Realist subject matter were few, the relationship between printmaking and the act of memorialization is sustained in images that capture something of the rapport between family members, sometimes documenting those who have died. While a series of seemingly conventionally composed still life and figurative prints made between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s brought Goodwin acclaim, it is the more private and personal production of her early Mourners prints of 1955, and the untitled monoprints of floating figures from the mid-1960s, that point the way to the work that follows. These prints suggest that emotional states of being create their own space of transaction. Here, figures escape their narrowly descriptive domestic interiors and emerge from a ground, free from gravity.

In 1963, Goodwin's painting and printmaking practices connected in a meaningful way for the first time. In that year, the floating figure, freed from the rigors of bodily posture, gravity and fixed anatomy, makes its first sustained appearance. These prints of 1963—many of which exist in numerous states—have a lightness about them absent from earlier work. No longer a protagonist in a domestic setting, the figure is released into the imaginative ether, floating, falling or twisting through space in a manner that recalls the work of the Russian-born French artist Marc Chagall. Chagall's omnipresent prints, as well as his earliest paintings, suggest the connection between the physical and imaginative realms. Figures dance, jump and fall, as if from another world.

Significantly, these later prints appear to have sparked the change in Goodwin's painting practices. As a medium, paper encouraged improvisation and led to breakthrough. In 1963, Goodwin produced larger paintings of the suspended figure, as well as numerous small pochades. While her paintings of domestic interiors seem carefully constructed, the figurative prints of the same period have a looser,



more experimental quality. Surfaces were played with and pictorial effects explored through varied applications of printer's ink. It is also clear that the largely figurative iconography in the prints allowed Goodwin the freedom to explore a wider world of imaginative pleasures and anxieties.

One thing is evident from looking back on both her printmaking and painting of the 1950s and early 1960s—the then-current, avant-garde Automatiste stance was not part of her sensibility. Certainly, she was distanced in social circles from the predominantly French-Canadian artists who were its proponents. But by rendering the figure, and the vestiges of its surroundings, she captured a sense of urgency shared by other women artists of her generation, including Ghitta Caiserman, Sylvia Ary and Rita Briansky. The figure was familiar, allowing for empathetic connection and offering a way of personalizing the grand ideas and themes of art. Where, in the 1940s, the Abstract Expressionists could reject the tenets of Social Realism by declaring “direct sensual experience is more real than living in the midst of symbols, slogans, worn out plots,” Goodwin found in the figure a way to communicate life experiences that were immediate, and a direct way of empathizing with the lives of others.

A talisman of her earliest years of printmaking was the work of the German artist Käthe Kollwitz, who communicated universal truths through the figure. Kollwitz's images of the trauma of war had a notable profile in the Montreal community of the 1940s, certainly among the Jewish artists who looked to her imagery from the First World War to help understand the horrors of the Holocaust. Ghitta Caiserman, for example, organized an exhibition of Kollwitz's prints from Montreal collections and presented it in her home in the early 1940s. Goodwin acquired a number of Kollwitz prints at around this time.

Kollwitz's work, securely anchored in the socialist and revolutionary beliefs of her day, argued through poetic means for the shared fates of the working classes. In Kollwitz's world, there is rarely true individualism; an individual's actions are always elicited from relations with others. She used expressive renderings of the human body to capture emotion and to bracket concern for the unbridled industrialism that she felt had led to war and conflict. The human body, as a subject in art, could both encapsulate direct feeling and call up specific memory, the better to mourn. When, in 1914, Kollwitz wrote an entry to her dead son in her journal—“I want to honour the death of all of you young war-time volunteers embodied in *your* form”—she declared the figure as her way into art as healing.

Since the mid-1960s, and in notable anticipatory moments of the late 1940s and 1950s, the figure and its equivalent have been the singular consistent thread in Goodwin's art, encapsulating primary emotions with traces of their opposite. Her figures linger in a world where rage and reconciliation, joy and sadness, coexist in space and time. They seem to inhabit an expansive world of possibility while shunning a universe irreducibly contained. They declare steadfastness in the face of brutality, and resolution in the shell of a frayed, torn and sometimes compromised spirit. The figure leads Goodwin to a true connection with a world of contradiction. Incorporating text within a work of 1973 titled *Nest*, for example, Goodwin lays out the opposing dictionary definitions: first, “a small cozy retreat or place of residence . . . a snugger,” and then its opposite, “the abode of anything evil, baneful or criminal . . . a nest of vice.” For Goodwin, such existence in a world of opposites, such existential ambivalence, is tied to the charge of living.



Untitled (1963)

*The idea of the fallen figure suggests helplessness as much as the freedom of the fall. This monoprint is one of a small number of works from 1963 in which Goodwin pulls the figure from a swirl of marks. In these works, the most abstract she had made thus far, the figure is given definition at the last possible moment in the realization of the composition. The freedom of the marks, reminiscent of the soft touch of then-contemporary artists such as Mark Tobey or Wols or, further back, Paul Klee, suggests the freedom of the unconscious. Here, the body is ephemeral and light to the touch, always in danger of disappearing or floating away from reach.*

Untitled, 1963

Monoprint on paper

45.6 x 61

Art Gallery of Ontario

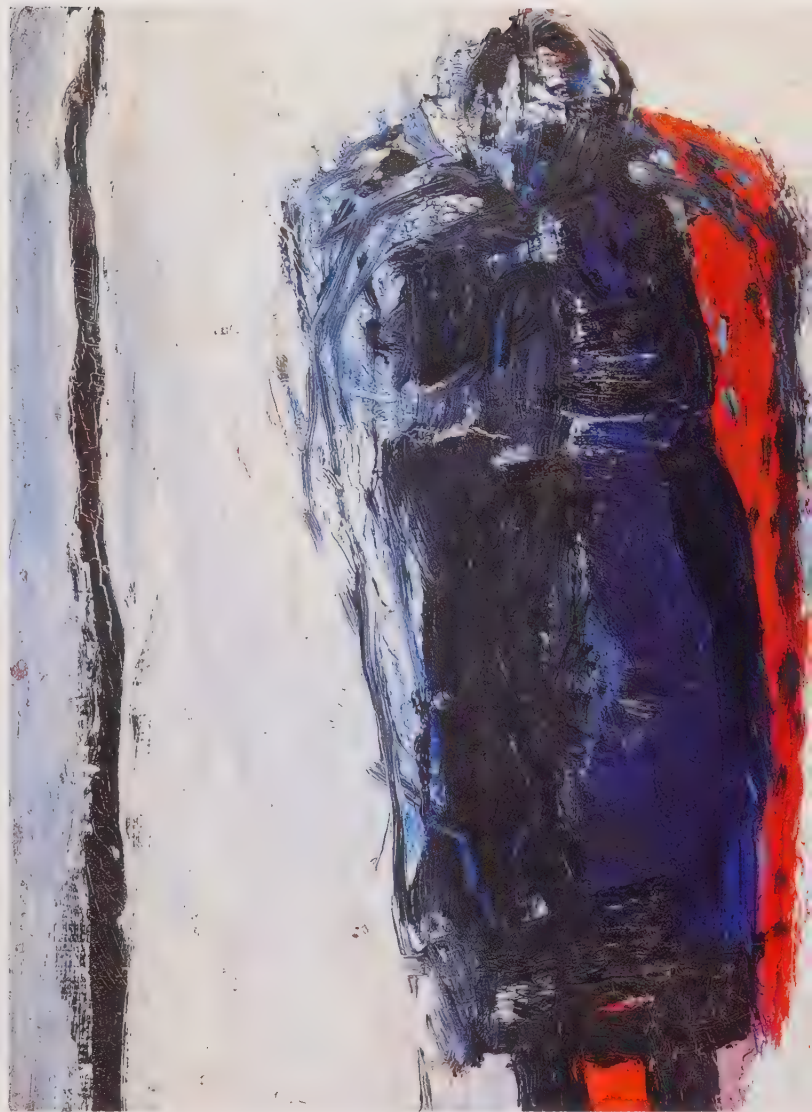


In the early spring of 1968, Goodwin began to study printmaking with Yves Gaucher, then teaching at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. In choosing to return to printmaking, she wanted to be closer to the materials of her art and, through the manipulation of material in the printing process, to find a direct and sculptural connection with paper and ink.

It proved to be an important decision. From the earliest prints she made in Gaucher's studio, it was clear that printmaking offered more than a technical reorientation for Goodwin; the source of her imagery was to radically reconnect with her earliest beginnings as an artist. The still life and domestic subjects of the previous twenty years were replaced with specific references which, in spirit and intention, recalled works from 1950 such as *Waiting* and *The Park*, and the small group of prints from 1955. The gloves and vests (and later, the shirts and cap) connected to her earliest desire to make an art of moral urgency.

The vests were remnants of her life, some of them drawn from her personal life and the life of her family, others gathered from vintage clothing stores and chosen for their lived-in qualities. As well, the vest was the icon of her father-figure and art-mentor of the time, Joseph Beuys, who often wore a vest during public appearances. While not tied explicitly to the narrative quality of Social Realist painting, Goodwin's works using articles of clothing, and the Vests in particular, share a similar, deeply felt elegiac quality. They suggest that images can encapsulate states of remembering, and communicate that quiet desperation inherent in the struggle to hold on to an idea or a feeling that is soon to be lost.

For a period of almost five years, from 1969 until 1973, Goodwin developed a series of prints and related works which linked the isolated clothing fragment and the physical body. In numerous images of a man's vest—some soft-ground etchings, others manipulations of actual vests mounted on board, still others sculptural in their presentation in constructed boxes—she explored an iconography both intensely personal and wide-ranging in its implications.



**Untitled, 1963**

Oil on masonite

20 x 15.3

*Art Gallery of Ontario*





Uniform for Vietnam, 1969

Etching

37.4 x 28.8

Art Gallery of Ontario

#### Uniform for Vietnam (1969)

*Uniform for Vietnam is a transitional work for Goodwin, a symbolically laden image borrowed from another life. A uniform for prisoners of war, the shirt, jacket, satchels and folded pants are laid out for use. In its startling matter-of-factness, Uniform for Vietnam is a quiet inventory of the body under restraint; it is charged with anticipation of confinement. It is an inventory of a life stopped in time, rather than a reminder of specific experience. It is a cautionary tale of the common man, the victimized army soldier who finds his parallel in the factory worker of the 1930s.*



**Vest No. 1, 1969**

Soft-ground etching on wove  
paper

70 x 56.3

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

**Vest No. 1 (1969)**

*It sits before us matter-of-factly. There are creases, a slight downward thrust on the left, just like an aging body. It is used (crumpled, seemingly worn around the bottom), and it sits before us as a remnant of a life. Perhaps we should not assume, but we do: it is a worker's vest, the sort worn in the factories of Montreal's garment district. It is the shirt off one's back, an essential material possession marking the earnestness and simplicity of life. It stands also (we know) symbolically as Goodwin's father's vest and, in the act of using it, Goodwin gives her father (for herself) immortality. She preserves the memory of his body in a work of art.*









*this page:*

**Vest**, 1974

Metal pins and acrylic on  
mat board

76.4 x 76.6

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

**Vest (on Aluminum)**, 1973

Mixed media

68 x 75

*Private collection*

The Vests, and the prints of other articles of clothing made at the same time, have an emotional presence that suggests both future life and a memorial to times past. These etchings, rich in texture, charged in the saturation of the applied inks and resonant against a background of art's then-anxious search for new materials, were works very much of their time.

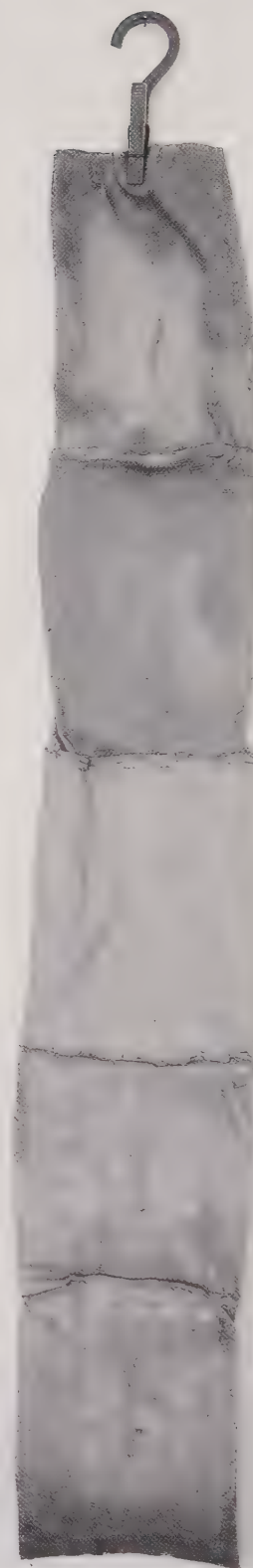
Betty Goodwin was not alone in questioning art's purpose in the late 1960s. In retrospect, this much is apparent: by that time, the possibility of a dominant style in the art world seemed almost absurd, particularly as critic after critic declared the death of painting. Orthodoxies and movements (and the ease with which critics and artists could name them) had been so assaulted by new ideas and energies, it could be said that certainty collapsed at the very moment that everything seemed possible.

Certainly, this was true in Canada, where various centres of activity were marked by intense scrutiny of the artist's project. Paterson Ewen and Murray Favro in London, Ontario; Joe Fafard and Vic Cicansky in Regina; Roy Kiyooka and Ian Wallace in Vancouver; Michael Snow in Toronto; Charles Gagnon and Betty Goodwin in Montreal—all were engaged, from 1969 until 1971, with a fundamental rethinking of the meaning and materials of their work.

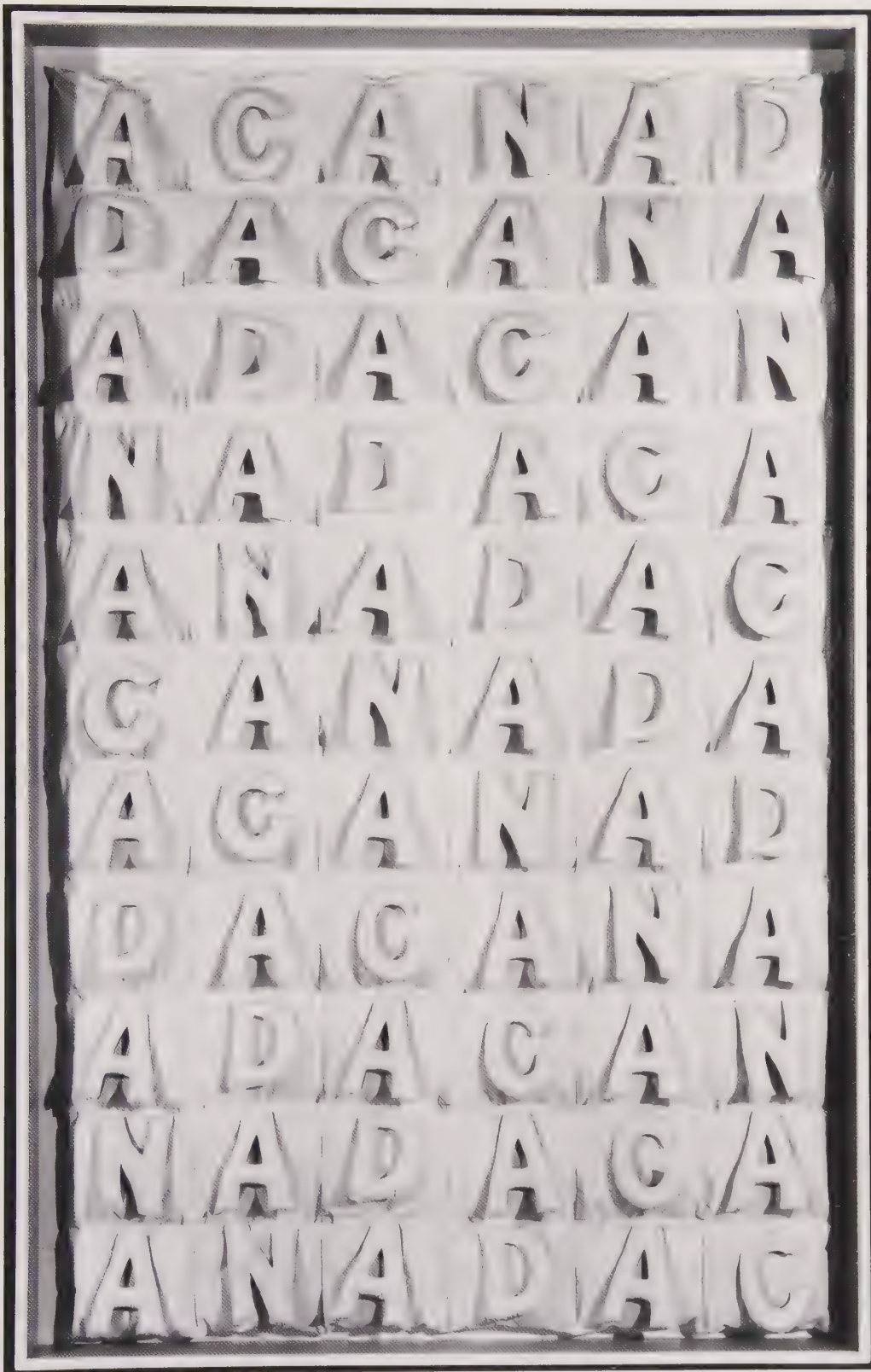
Radical changes in art production, rooted in the collapse of traditional categories of practice, reverberated in the growing communities of women artists who believed that traditional artistic hierarchies had been inflexible and exclusive. Feminist declarations were slowly beginning to alter all aspects of life, from employment conditions to health care and education. Similarly, feminism affected both the subject matter and the means used by women artists, as well as the critical framework in which the production and presentation of their work could be understood.

Art writing played an important role in forming, altering and encouraging the development of both aesthetic and political positions in the art world of the late 1960s. Feminist readings of the historical contributions of women artists were beginning to be published, and the writings of Lucy Lippard, Cindy Nemser, Miriam Schapiro and Linda Nochlin, among others, were giving prominence to living female artists such as Eva Hesse, Jackie Winsor, Judy Chicago and Michelle Stuart. Lippard's work specifically celebrated a generation of women artists who gave voice to the ephemeral and gave the subject matter of domestic life credence as viable content.

Lippard and other writers encouraged artists to explore their world, championing drawings of unmade beds (Irene Siegel), word-images that talked of patriotism (Joyce Wieland), self-portrait photographs recording weight loss and myths of identity (Eleanor Antin), and diaper liners used as material for art (Mary Kelly). Meanwhile, feminist writing privileged the antiheroic and quotidian over the heroic (but carefully drew a distinction between the texture of intimate domestic life and the glossy consumer culture celebrated in Pop art







*this page:*

Joyce Wieland

**Canada**, 1972

Sewn and filled fabric  
assemblage

223.5 x 140.34

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

Eva Hesse

**Untitled**, 1968

Latex on wire mesh, plastic  
clothespin hook

approx. 76.2 x 22.9

*The Estate of Eva Hesse*

*Photo courtesy Robert Miller  
Gallery, New York*

*page 26:*

**All the Feathers Are Gone**,

1969

Fabric and buttons on mat  
board

74.5 x 54.2

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*page 27:*

**Untitled (Love Is the Most**

**Delicate . . . )**, 1973

Typescript, nylon thread and  
staples on paper

62.5 x 47.4

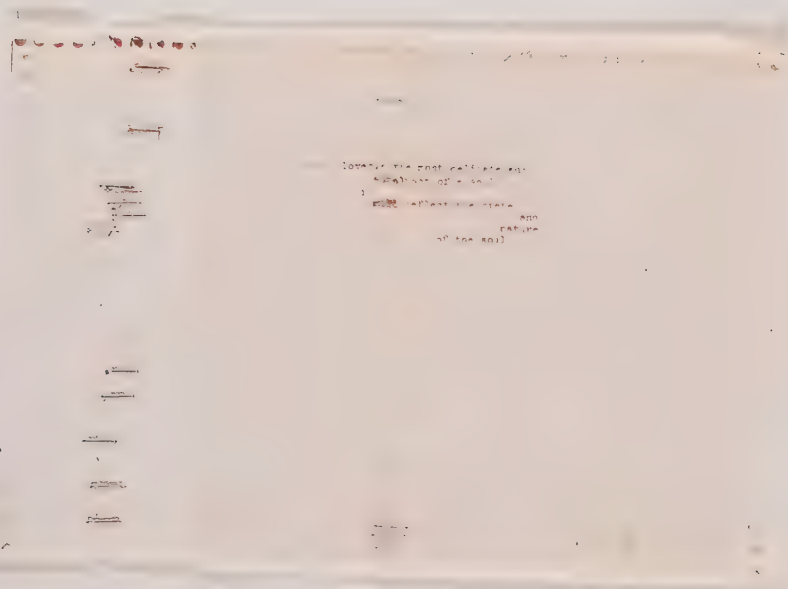
*Art Gallery of Ontario*





11

12



13

14





imagery of shopping bags and food products).

These artists were actively inserting the tactile into the vocabulary of art, acknowledging the value and meaning of their domestic lives through references to the processes of knotting, sewing, mixing. Eva Hesse linked domestic and industrial material by pouring latex over cheesecloth. Joyce Wieland made the stitched quilt an object of sustained contemplation. Fabric of various kinds, rope, ceramic, cotton, unravelled wool—these were the new materials of art. Informed as well by the material processes that were the founding principles of Minimalism, these artists reintroduced an implied narrative content into their practice without the explicitness of representational painting and sculpture.

When Goodwin took the image of the vest and expanded from it to a wider vocabulary of other objects of intimate and hand-held scale, she did so within an art context that sanctioned the personal and the materials of the home as valid subject matter for art. Her prints and sculptures of vests, shirts, gloves and hats that she made following her study with Gaucher led to related objects: delicately rendered nest forms, and then images of small packages made, as some of the vests and nests were, by passing the object itself through the press and registering its imprint. Each evoked an enclosure, suggesting the delineation of a boundary that provides sanctuary from the world.

**Nest Six, 1973**

Etching on wove paper

65.5 x 49.8

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

#### **Nest Six (1973)**

*The nest is a home made by the mother, a place of refuge for her family. It is both a physical place of rest, and a figurative, or imaginative, enclosure through which a family is defined. To be in a nest is to be in a place of love and caring. In Nest Six, the delicacy in the print's rendering is palpable. Yet, no matter how certain we are that nests are a place of refuge, there is vulnerability here, for the nest is also a place of transaction, of layered and uncertain inter-connection. As a social space, it suggests, as do the Vests, absence rather than presence. It is the body absent from the space it creates for itself.*

From 1969 on, the development of imagery in Goodwin's work was neither rigid nor strictly sequential. Often, within the trajectory of a series of prints, she would begin work on related drawings, and one etching series never precluded another with related subject matter. What marked the various works, however, was the theme of reparation. Her subjects and material processes were, more and more, the same: the nests were bound from twigs, the parcels were held together with string, and the Note drawings and prints of 1973 and 1974 made the act of holding, binding or suturing through staples, string and tape commensurate with the creative act. When, in *Untitled (Love Is the Most Delicate . . .)* (1973), Goodwin attached three pieces of paper with seventeen randomly placed staples, she pulled together not only a fragile work of art that threat-

ened to blow apart but a text about love. There is an equivalence suggested here between content and form. At the moment that the work threatens to disintegrate, a testament about love—"the most delicate and total act of a soul"—barely coheres. Importantly, Goodwin suggests, emotional states and works of art are bound together equally, not by the imagination but by acts of creative will.

## VI

In the Vests, subject and process were linked in a profoundly new way in Goodwin's practice. Many of her works of the early 1970s, such as the Vests, echoed the body. They suggested, in part through the intimacy of the rendering, a connection to the artist's hand. Scale, after all, is generally understood and internalized, by both artist and viewer, in relation to the body. Grand painting gestures mirror the arc of the arm; the intimate drawn line reflects the smaller arc of the hand.

In 1974, with the realization of her first Tarpaulin works, Goodwin exploded this hand-held sense of scale. The series of nine works made between 1974 and 1976 from well-worn truck tarpaulins (a tenth work was made in 1991) allowed Goodwin to work in a manner commensurate with her printmaking practice: she folded the tarpaulins, stretched them and applied gesso, oils and pastels to their surfaces. These grounds—the largest of which was eight feet square—were dark and brooding, always black, dark brown or a sun-bleached version of one or the other. They were invariably formed from the stitching together of one or more heavy canvas sheets, and their surfaces often had stitch marks of one sort or another, holding the two sides together or providing repair to worn sections. Marks on the surface noted time in the way geological strata mark the accretions of years and repairs to clothing suggest a long life. Through her own interventions on the receptive surface, Goodwin then gave to the material a heightened sense of time's passage.

This active surface recalled Goodwin's past work. In the Tarpaulin works, however, she allowed the support of the tarpaulin itself to establish experiential rather than descriptive scale. Though many works were folded, they were all imposing, larger-than-life forms, effectively positioning the spectator within an expansive field. In effect, the sheer scale of the Tarpaulins made the very rooms in which they were shown an element in the experience of apprehending the work.

### **Tarpaulin #8, 1976**

Tarpaulin, gesso, rope, wire

322.6 x 261.6

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

### **Tarpaulin #8 (1976)**

*The marks are whispers on the canvas surface, and the delineation between found material and the artist's intervention is hard to determine. The Tarpaulins "retain their own history," Goodwin has remarked, "to which I add my own history." These images, neither abstract nor representational, are by any definition symbolic, standing not in the Minimalist tradition of simple truth to materials but in the Romantic narrative tradition of mark-making as evidence of the artist's presence. A blue line here, a gessoed surface there, moving in a field activated by the artist's hand—Goodwin marks the surface with a quiet care that comes from long study.*









Goodwin achieved this change in scale by connoting the body through the trace of her own action in real space. At a time when performance art was gaining recognition (in part through the advent of video) and the construction of public space was being explored through installation art, the performative aspect of Goodwin's work linked the Tarpaulins to her room-sized installations that followed—*The Clark Street Project* of 1977, *The Mentana Street Project* of 1979, as well as *River Piece*, an outdoor sculpture made at Artpark in Lewiston, New York, in the summer of 1978.

In the context of Robert Smithson's outdoor earthworks of the early 1970s, which grandly repositioned mounds of earth in new landscape configurations, and Gordon Matta-Clark's interventions into urban architecture in the mid-1970s (in one case, literally cutting a building into two sections), Goodwin began, for the first time in her practice, to work on the floor, setting aside the easel, the table and the printing press which had previously determined her scope of action. Here, gesture revealed the weight and movement of the whole body through the hand, allowing for a release into a new scale. The caress, the slap, the push were all actions inscribed on the surface of the Tarpaulins.

To be within the Tarpaulin was to be within such feeling, and to be surrounded by emotion. As the Vests suggested the remembering of times past, the dark ground of the Tarpaulins conjured the space of memory itself. Where the Vests stood as events within the landscape of memory, the Tarpaulins became the physical ground on which memory was enacted.

## VII

The landscape of memory suggests an active place; a place of engagement with feelings for others; a place, finally, of transformation. Contemporary art in the age of the AIDS health crisis and of increasing media documentation of famine, genocide, plague and environmental destruction, is rife with works that commemorate the past and remember those lost. Always resonant within the tradition of art is the belief that images are made to encapsulate emotion and provide testament to the life of feeling.

In 1992, the American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres made a work consisting of a curtain of floor-to-ceiling beads that swung gracefully as the viewer passed through. The refracted light made the beads seem immaterial, suggesting the fleeting nature of optical sensation and of existence itself. *Untitled (Blood)* (1992) is poetic in its simplicity and stunning in the insistent way it quietly reveals the body's fragility.

Similarly, a number of works by the French artist Christian Boltanski have, since the early 1970s, used clothing, photographs and low-voltage light sources to suggest the quiet, solitary act of remembering. Where there is darkness there is silence, Boltanski suggests, and in doing so he underlines the unyielding sadness that lies at the core of remembering the dead. In his *Monument Canada 1988*, a mound of clothing arranged in piles is stacked beneath a grid of out-of-focus photographs of school

*facing page, left:*

Felix Gonzalez-Torres

**Untitled (Blood)**, detail, 1992

Plastic beads and metal rod

Dimensions variable

*Photo by Marc Domage,*

*courtesy Andrea Rosen Gallery,*

*New York*

*facing page, right:*

Christian Boltanski

**Monument Canada 1988,**

1988

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

*Private collection*

*Photo courtesy Marian*

*Goodman Gallery, New York*





children. While the clothing endures, stubbornly real, the ghostly presences of the children threaten to evaporate before our eyes.

Goodwin often situates the body on the line which separates the present from the past. In a recent drawing, *Untitled (Nerves, No. 1)* (1993), she explores the dividing line between being and nonbeing, between life and death. A prostrate body gives and receives energy from the earth, the long, vein-like roots appearing to bind the body to some deeper source.

These works connect, yet stand alone. Each is a fragile gesture. In their ephemerality, they are much like surrogate bodies, always on the verge of disappearing. Such is the poignant moment in apprehending a work of art, for like art itself, mourning is an act meant to preserve, to hold memory back from the precipice. As the American painter Philip Guston paraphrased the great modernist writer Franz Kafka: “art is the axe which breaks the frozen sea within us.” Betty Goodwin’s art reminds us of this always: that art is made as homage and rooted in connectedness to others, that it is made to unite us in reflections on our experience, that it is made to open up and, finally, to extend the space of memory.

**Untitled (Nerves, No. 1).**

1993

Oil, pastel, tar and wax on  
mylar

196.3 x 134.5

*Art Gallery of Ontario*





# A Conversation with Betty Goodwin

From two interviews in Betty Goodwin's Montreal studio

March 30 and April 14, 1998

*by Jessica Bradley*

*Betty Goodwin talks about pushing her work until she is pulled by it in some inexorable and exhilarating way. The first tugs, it seems, are almost unexpected, a relief and a release. Yet there is nothing passive in this push and pull. Betty's determination is palpable.*

Betty Goodwin, 1987

*Photo courtesy Betty Goodwin*

*I first encountered it one Saturday in June 1980, while working on the exhibition *Pluralities* at the National Gallery of Canada. I had agreed to spend the day with her, melting and pouring hundreds of pounds of paraffin wax to line the walls of a corridor she was building as part of her installation *Passage* in a Red Field. The week had been filled with discussions about the unfeasibility of this endeavour; that is, by the rest of us. Betty's gaze was fixed. Now it seems amusing to recall how her eyes would glaze over as the various hurdles and possible pitfalls of the task were rehearsed and the alternatives plotted. What if the wax did not adhere once it cooled? What if it dropped out as soon as the walls were raised?*

*Betty's vision never wavered. There were no options or alternatives. The crew went home for the weekend. And so, with the exhibition approaching, there was nothing to do but push forward, improvising with two deep-frying pots we acquired at the local Goodwill store and enough wax to seal a lifetime's worth of preserves.*

*All day long we poured pot after potful of molten wax into the troughs between the studs of the wall sections, which had been laid out like huge cake tins in the cavernous workshops of the National Gallery. Stirring and pouring, we developed a silent rhythm punctuated by streams of conversation, the kind that wanders and loops back upon itself with neither end nor purpose.*

*As the day wore on, the wax cooled, turning from clear to milky, its surface a glossy perfection born of the magic of molecular transformation from liquid to solid. Every trough filled, we left exhausted and*

*emerged into the light of a perfect summer evening. That's when we began to talk again: about how the wax would look by morning, about the other elements of the installation, about other work, about not knowing how a work will be resolved, but knowing without either rationale or guarantees what path must be taken.*

*Several times since then, Betty Goodwin's work—and the way she works—has reminded me of that childhood game "Paper, Scissors, Rock" in which, through a series of hand gestures, one element triumphs over the other and the victor gets to administer a triumphant slap. It is not the inherent if harmless violence that comes to mind but the way that, in this symbolic battle of strength and fragility, the most solid and immutable thing—the rock—can be nullified by a flimsy piece of paper.*

**JB:** The standard story, the myth, about Betty Goodwin is that somewhere in the late 1960s and early 1970s, she began her career. But, of course, you had been working and showing work for more than twenty years.

**BG:** I sent out to exhibitions in Canada, and I sent to the spring shows at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. But at a certain point, I became dissatisfied with the work. At that time I was working in a rather conventional way but never felt that the work was connected to my particular being. So I said, "Betty, give yourself two years. Stick to your drawing and see what will happen." So I confined myself to black and white, which very quickly moved back into etching. I had begun etching in the 1950s with Gunter Nolte, and by the end of the 1960s John Ivor Smith was at Sir George Williams University and asked me if I was interested in having access to the printmaking studios. He arranged for me to work on Fridays with Yves Gaucher. Through Yves, I learned the techniques of etching, which enabled me, through soft-ground, to arrive at an image of the vest. This was cathartic in terms of a connection. That was when I began to feel better about what I was doing.

**JB:** When you began soft-ground etching—that is, putting actual objects through the press and taking their imprint—you didn't begin with the vests. You ended up there.

**BG:** I started with gloves, and I did a lot of variations. In soft-ground etching, the object makes an image right onto the plate which you can manipulate, working on the plate with different acids. With the Vest series, I made a very explosive and meaningful connection. I worked on it for four years, and finally I just had to end it, which I did by burying a vest, literally, in the earth.

**JB:** Whether you were using a pair of gloves, a shirt or a vest over and over again, you were moving gradually from two-dimensionality to three-dimensionality in your work—moving off the surface of the canvas and the paper. Even though the vests became imprinted on paper, you were already beginning to use objects in your work.

*facing page, top:*

Research for Vest series

*Photo by Betty Goodwin*

*facing page, bottom:*

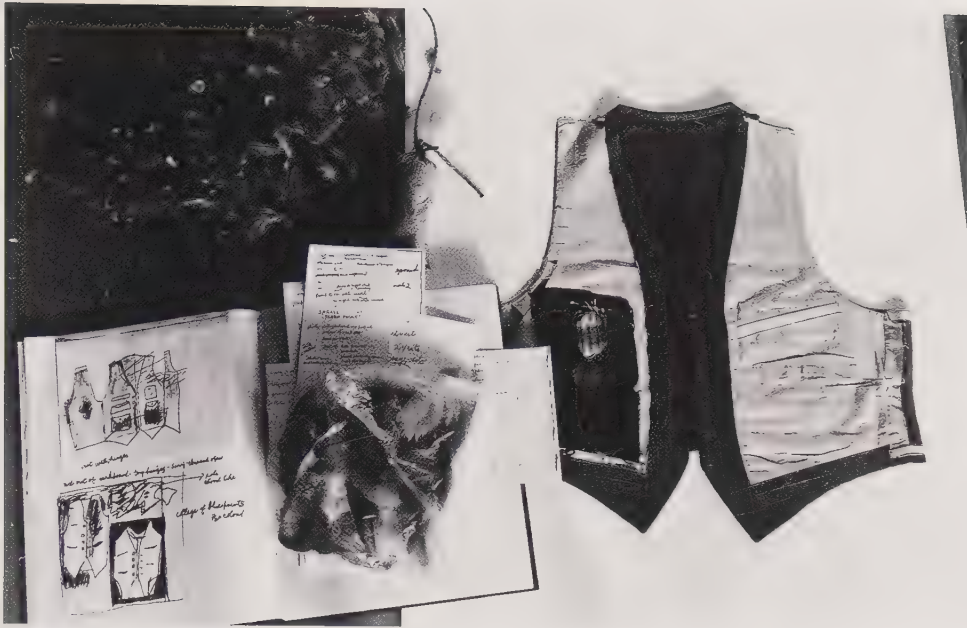
**Gloves, 1970**

Soft-ground etching on wove paper

50.1 x 65

*Art Gallery of Ontario*







*this page:*

**Vest-Earth, 1974**

Mixed media

99 x 58.5 x 11.5

*Collection of the artist*

*Photo by Richard-Max*

*Tremblay*

*facing page:*

**Parcel/Vest, 1972**

Brown ink, folded paper and  
string on wove paper

36.4 x 31.1

*Art Gallery of Ontario*





**BG:** I kept a lot of the vests that I ran through the press. Some of the vests still had the soft-ground compound on them. What was created was not planned. During the same period, walking on the street, I saw the tarpaulins that were covering the large transport trucks. In a way, they were coverings like vests. I remember going to a depot where they were repairing them. These really big tarpaulins were going through the machines, and the men were sewing the little areas that were torn. I remember buying eleven. I still have one. It's not started. That was such a gift. I took photographs without realizing what I was going to do with them. Then I went and bought them. The process finally led to the Tarpaulin series. It is always interesting to me and reassuring when, while in one cycle, I begin to get the ideas for the next cycle. Sometimes there is such a gap. You have to wait. It's going to come when it's ready to come.

**JB:** Speaking of the overlapping of cycles, weren't you also working on box shapes? You were going into three dimensions, making sarcophagus shapes, and the kites.

**BG:** The kites came from the tarpaulins. It was pieces of tarpaulin that were very similar to vests in terms of the holes and the way they were folded. I did quite a few collages using the tarpaulins, and then I began to make long boxes with the tarpaulins. But I don't think I ever sold those. I didn't get to the point where I felt they were working. They worked for me to get somewhere else.

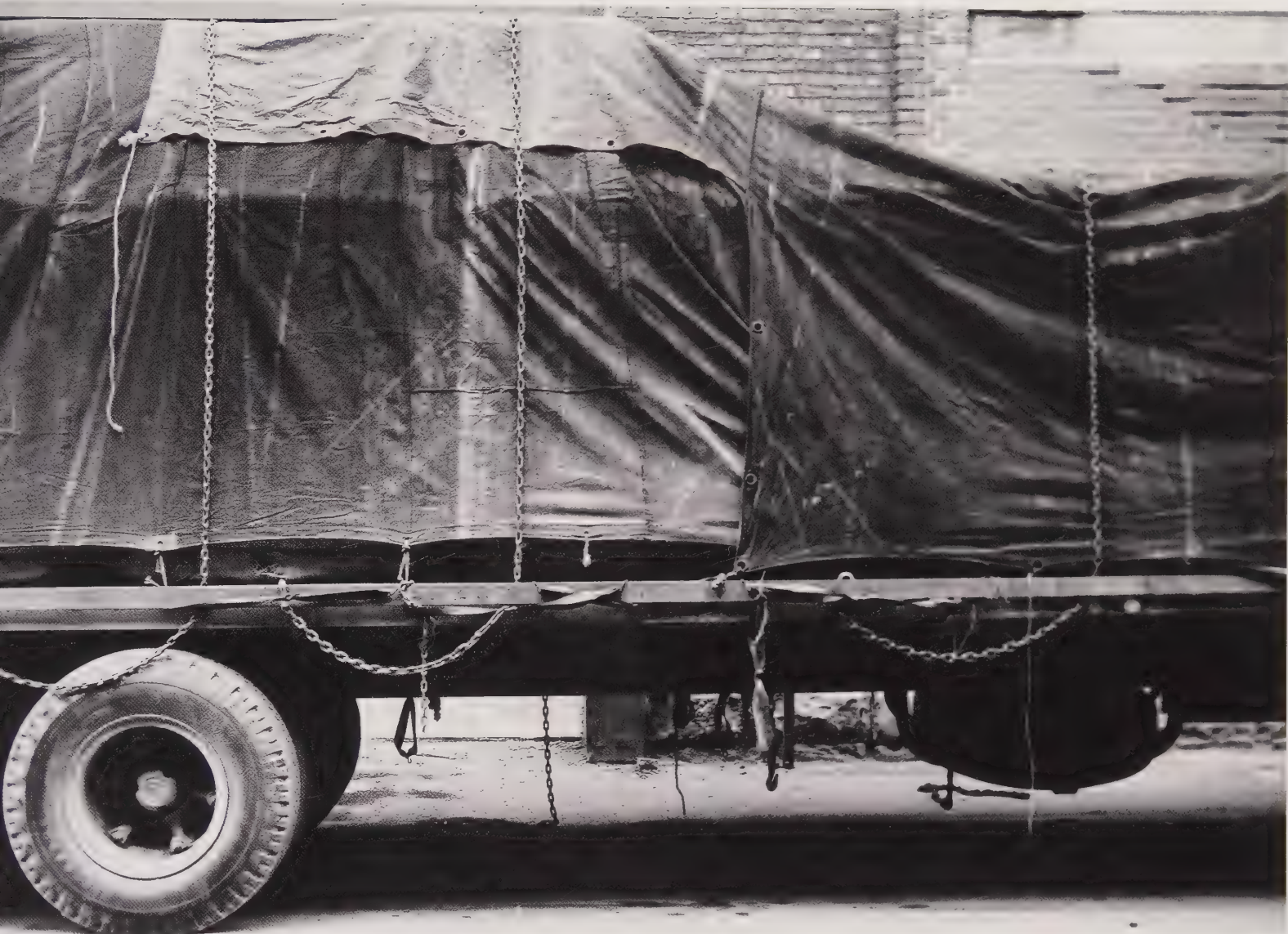
**JB:** This seems to have an interesting relationship to another transitional moment, where the Vest and the Parcel works run together. Working with folding and string somehow seemed to flow into the Tarpaulins. Meanwhile, you were working with three-dimensional box shapes in the drawings.

**BG:** Yes. That was a very good time for me. I worked this into drawing and left everything else.

**JB:** You seem to have been aware that you were onto something that was really your own. You applied for and received a Canada Council grant, and you went off to visit Ken Tyler at Gemini Press. Were you interested in looking at what the great presses were doing?

**BG:** Yes, but I don't work well in a group. I got this very big press and kept it up in the country at Sainte-Adèle, where we used to live most of the time. That was really my studio at that point. We would stay ten days or so at a time and we had an apartment here in Montreal. I liked the process of wiping the plate. You could do it perfectly and get exactly what was there, or you could manipulate a bit according to your own desires. That was a great time for me.





**JB:** Wasn't it at around the same time that you met Marcel Lemyre, who became your studio assistant and close friend?

Truck tarpaulin, 1974

*Photo by Betty Goodwin*

**BG:** I met him at Gilles Corbeil's gallery. It was next door to Roger [Roger Bellemare, director of Galerie B]. I went in to see an exhibition, and we talked. He helped me a lot with the Tarpaulins, because there was a lot of painting and folding, refolding and hanging. He was a young artist beginning.

**JB:** And he introduced you to Roger Bellemare?



Galerie B, Montreal, October

1972

Photo courtesy Betty Goodwin

**BG:** That's right. Then Roger came up to the apartment to look at some of the prints. That was the beginning of ten years. It was a great ten years. It was intense but not anguished like the intensity today. We travelled. That's when I saw Joseph Beuys in Europe. I remember at one point Roger was doing so well in the gallery, he said, "How would you like a weekend trip to Paris?" And so we went to Paris for a weekend.

**JB:** In 1971, when you went to visit Gemini, didn't you also go to New York and leave some prints at the Museum of Modern Art? You were determined to get critical feedback.

**BG:** The only part of me that was really intense was my tenacity. I tried. The strange part is I never said, "I'm going to become an artist." I just kept going and persevered. It is not that different now in terms of perseverance. It's like a seed almost. The seed grows as you are doing the work. The finished part isn't in your head. The fact is that things come when they're ready to come. And when they're ready, you still push. I have said it many times. You push and push and push, and there's a moment at which the work begins to pull you. You take a deep breath and figure, "This is the best I can do."

**JB:** What about the move from the Tarpaulins into complete architectural spaces in *River Piece*, *The Clark Street Project*, *The Mentana Street Project*, *An Altered Point of View* at P.S.1, *Passage in a Red Field* at the National Gallery and, finally, *In Berlin, a Triptych: The Beginning of the Fourth Part*, all of which occupied you virtually from 1977 until 1981? I met you in 1979. It was during the period leading up to the *Pluralities* exhibition in 1980, and you came up a few times with Marcel to Ottawa to choose the space in the National Gallery. I never saw *The Clark Street Project*. I only heard about it.



**BG:** I wanted to get out of the studio. I had the idea of an enclosed space in my mind. That's the thing that happens to me is that it's sort of there and then you make a connection. The space had four columns. I covered them completely and had the light bulb hanging down inside the room.

**JB:** In *Clark Street* you turned the space into a drawing where you obscured the actual walls of the space and left the columns standing like an independent structure. *Clark Street* was like mentally peeling back the structures that were there and keeping just what you needed.

**BG:** I already had part of the work there with what existed in the space. It was a matter of moving and changing it. When I enclosed the columns, in a way it was like a Tarpaulin.

**JB:** In the photographs, it looks like that too. The black paper is stretched over a structure the way the tarpaulins would be stretched over the cargo on the truck. By closing in the four columns with this paper, you really created a room within a room. It's fascinating to me, because a couple of years later, maybe not consciously, you were working with the room within a room in *The Mentana Street Project*. The paper in *Clark Street* was painted black. It had this incredibly painterly quality, and I'm thinking of the same effect you produced in *Passage in a Red Field* at the National Gallery a couple of years later.

**BG:** They were all variations on the idea of passage. Even in *Mentana*, with a room inside a room, there was the small passage.

**JB:** I'll never forget the light in that space. I remember visiting Mentana one day, and you were sitting at the back at a little table in the kitchen where the light was more diffused. The back, as I recall, faced towards the east, so by that time of day the sun had moved to the front. I walked down the usual entrance hallway because I could see you at the end, and we chatted. I remember the graphite on the wall. Then you said, "Now turn around," and I went through where you had pierced through the double salon, and I walked through this wonderful passage or tunnel, which was lined with clay. And at the end was this extraordinary glow.

**BG:** Roger owned the building on Mentana. I didn't look around. I saw the space and wanted it. The room at the end came about because just down the street they were taking apart an old building and they were getting rid of those incredible beams, big squared logs. I used some of those to build the interior room at Mentana.

**JB:** I remember you shaded in the entire surface of the kitchen wall with graphite, revealing all the imperfections. It was this room that you sat in during the exhibition. What was it like for you when visitors came to see the installation?

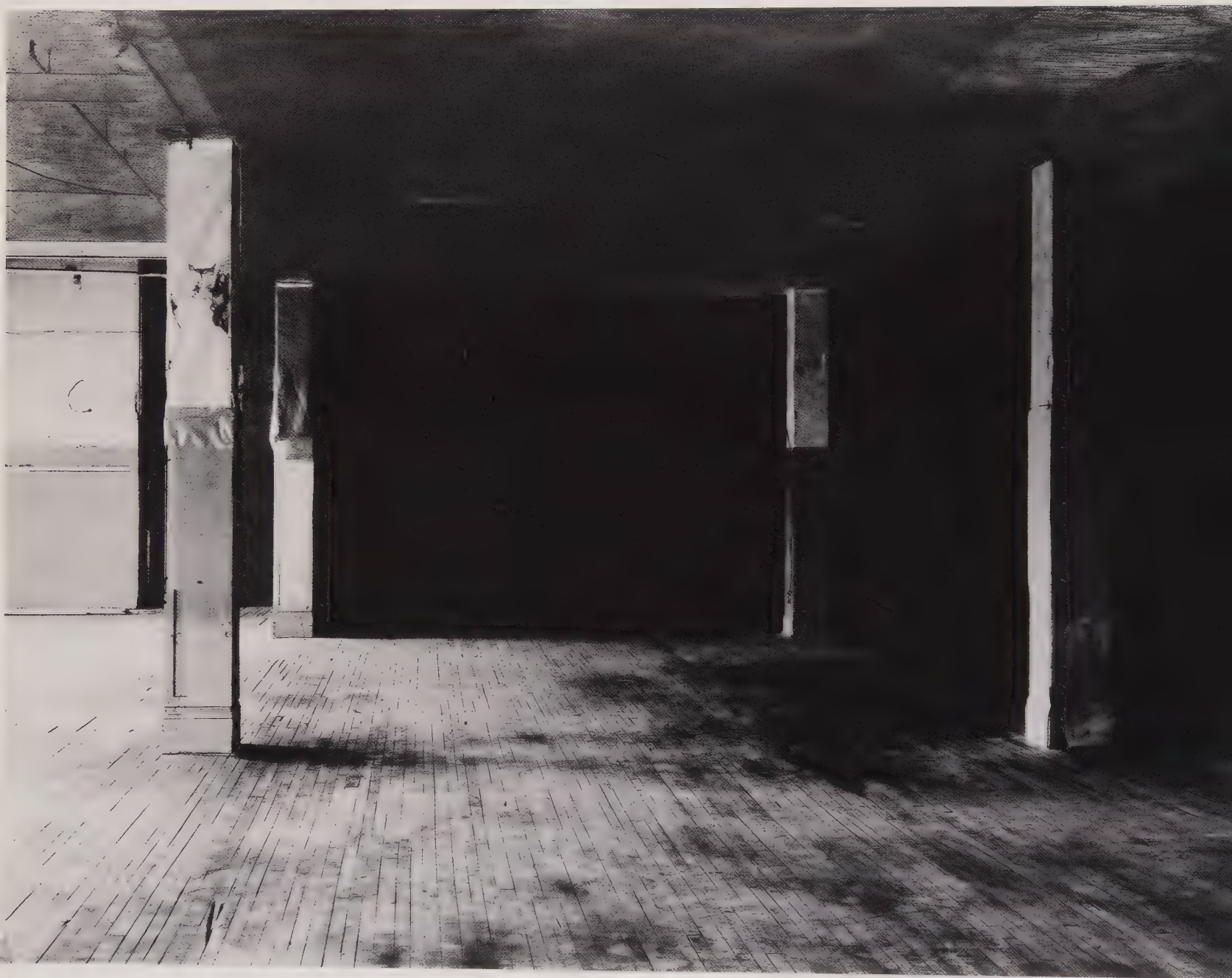
*pages 46–47*

**Four Columns to Support a Room, No. 3 (The Clark Street Project), 1977**

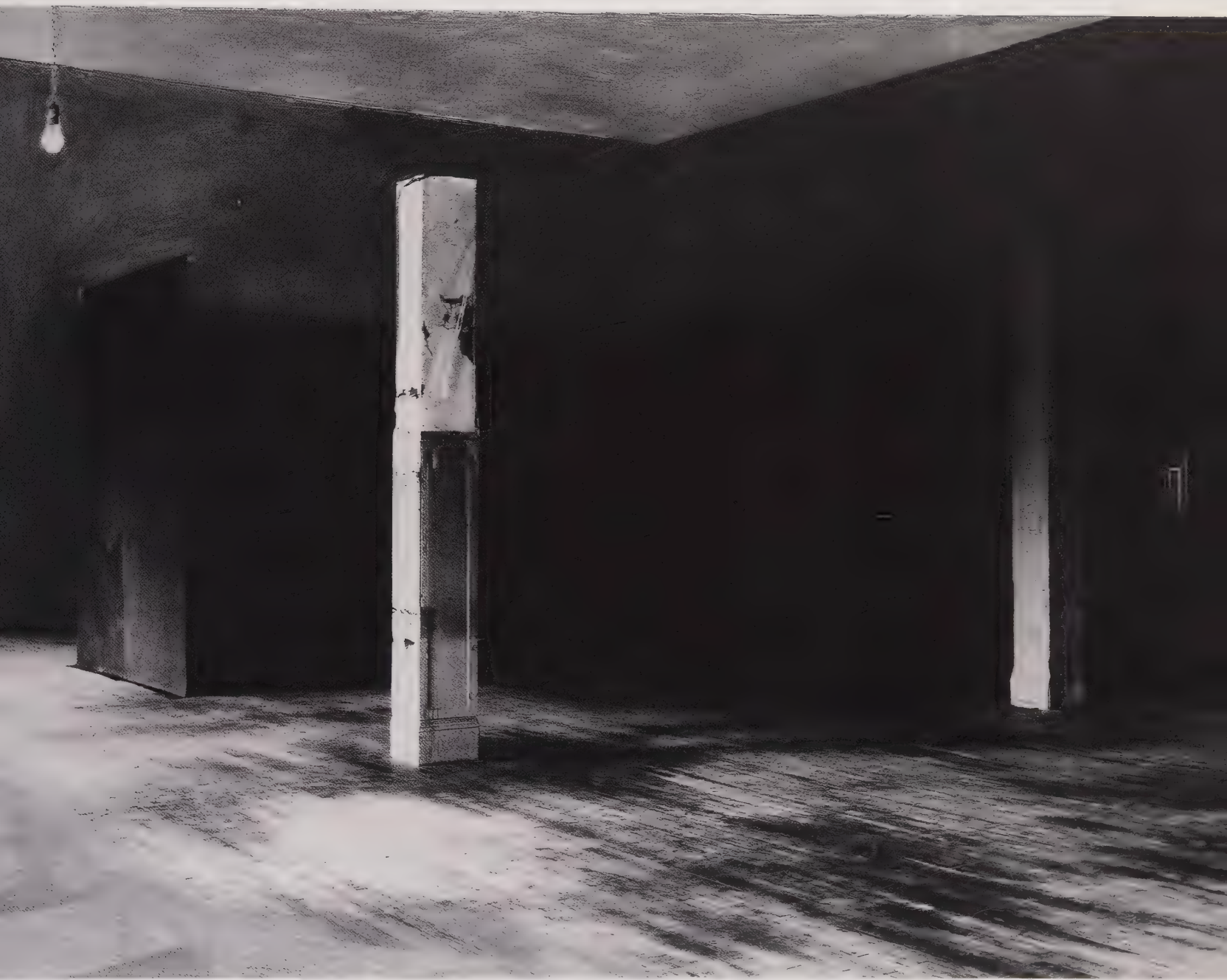
Oil on gelatin silver print

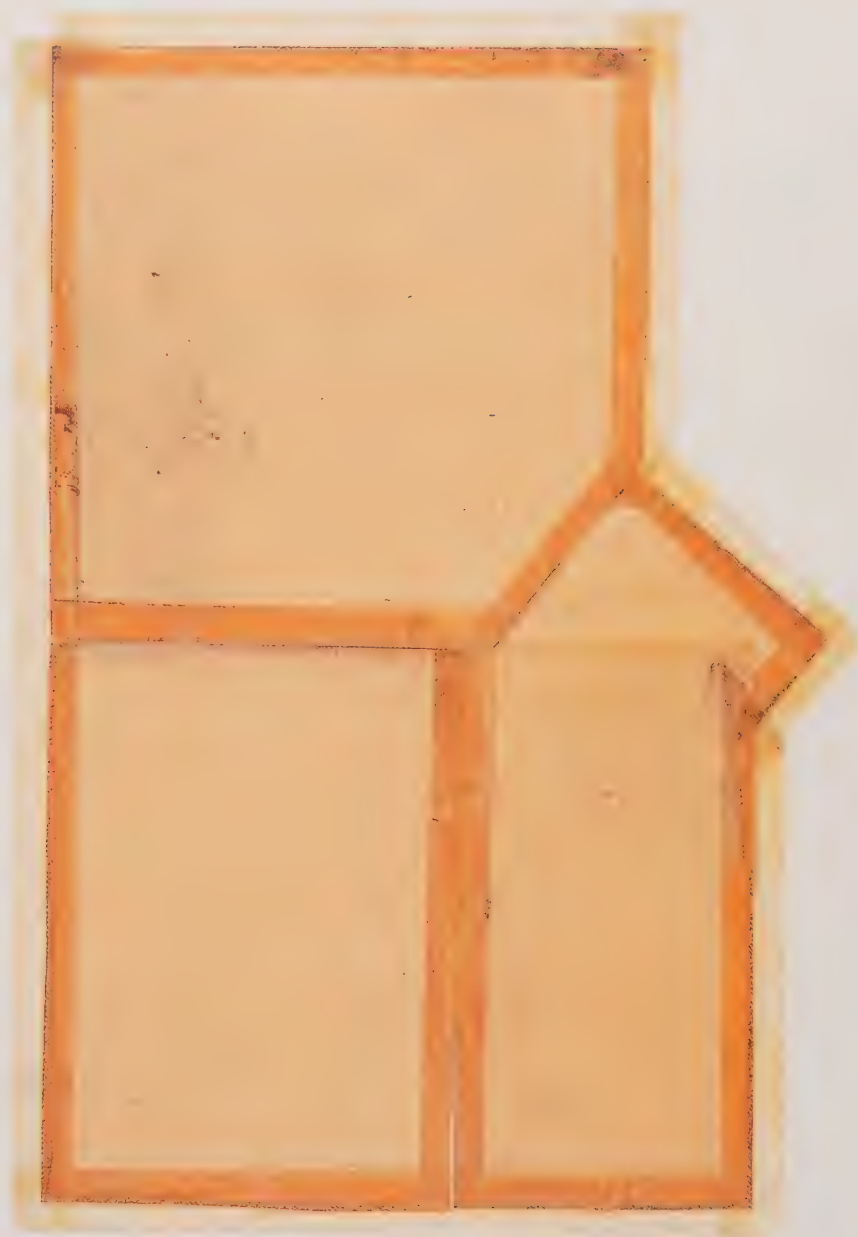
each 29.7 x 37.3

*Art Gallery of Ontario*











**BG:** It is something I would never ordinarily do in a gallery. It just seemed natural that I would sit there. It was OK. I never felt upset or any kind of discomfort with people coming in and talking about the work. It would be very different in a gallery. I really enjoyed doing that piece. Just building up the pencil on the wall over a period of time. There was something about it that was very satisfying.

**JB:** *River Piece*, which you did at Artpark—your first and only large-scale outdoor piece—*Mentana*, *An Altered Point of View* at P.S.1, *Passage in a Red Field* at the National Gallery of Canada and finally *Triptych* in Berlin in 1982—all of those pieces seem to be dealing with the idea of a shifting passage space. Did you feel that connection when you were working on them or is it something you now look back and see?

**BG:** I needed that experience and I was very fortunate to find the Mentana Street site. As soon as I saw it, I felt I could do something with it. *Mentana* was a big breakthrough. There was the corridor between the two rooms there. Then there was the corridor going down with the ladder looking into the room at P.S.1. in New York. There were connections.

**JB:** At the time a lot of artists were working outside the museum. Did that give you permission?

**BG:** It gave me a possibility. If I'd thought of it before, I would have done it. But I didn't. I had absolutely no experience in handling space as part of the work. I wanted to see if I could cope with it. I got a lot out of *The Clark Street Project*. Taking photographs of the process and then working on the photographs. And I still think of the little pencilling I did in *Mentana*. I remember the feeling of it, going over it like a landscape. Then there was the mixture of gold and clay in the corridor. I learned a lot about light also.

**JB:** *The Mentana Street Project* must have been one of the first times I met Marcel. Then, in Ottawa, you all stayed for weeks when we worked on *Passage in a Red Field*. I remember that behind the false walls of the galleries there was a dead space. But it was not dead at all. It was alive with light. In a way it allowed you to continue from *Mentana*.

**BG:** It seemed like that. It was a gift, but that's why I chose that space to begin with.

**JB:** The Berlin piece was the end of the cycle of large sculptural installations concentrated on the idea of a shifting passage. In this last installation, you had the image of the megaphone and the very strong implied presence of the figure.

*facing page:*

**Untitled (The Mentana Street Project), 1978**

Graphite, coloured pencil, adhesive tape and collage on wove paper

65.8 x 50.5

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*pages 50–51:*

**The Mentana Street Project, 1979**

*Photos by Gabor Szilasi*







*this page, top and bottom:*

**Passage in a Red Field, 1980**

Installation view at the  
National Gallery of Canada

*Photos courtesy National Gallery  
of Canada*



*facing page:*

**The Link Could End at Any**

**Moment, 1981**

Mixed media with collage  
elements on oiled paper

61 x 91.6

*Art Gallery of Ontario*







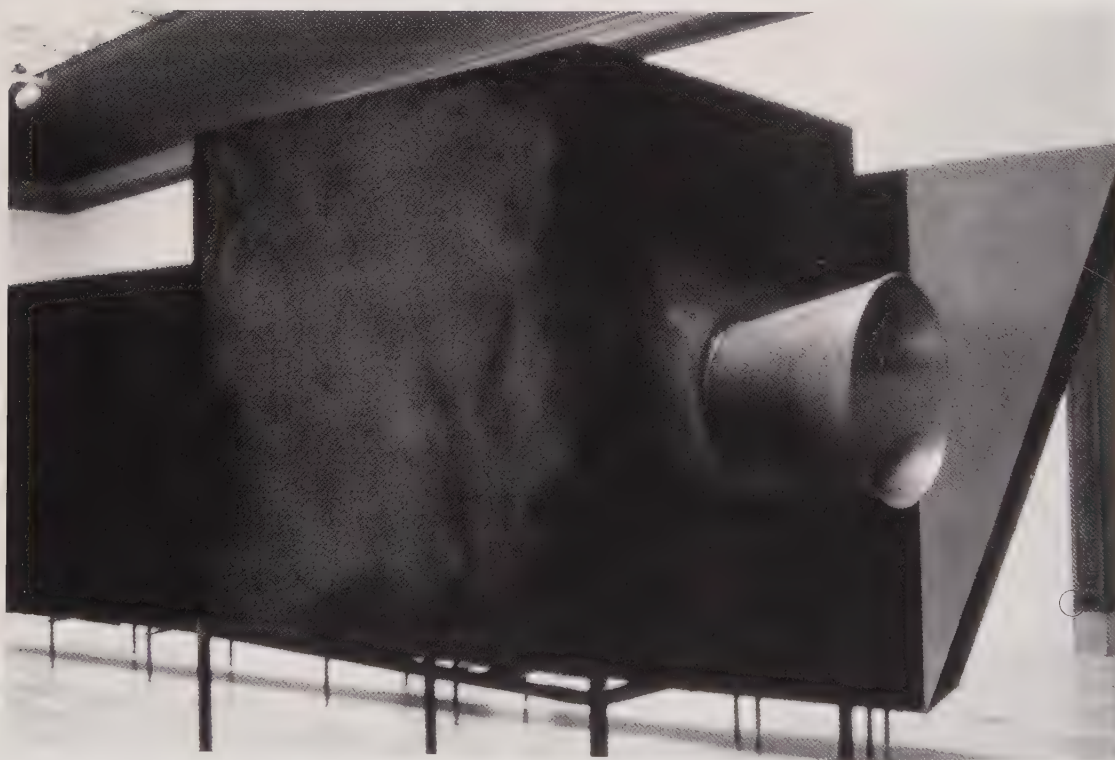


*top and bottom:*

**In Berlin, a Triptych: The  
Beginning of the Fourth  
Part, 1982**

Installation view at Montreal  
Museum of Fine Arts, 1982

*Photo by Brian Merrett,  
courtesy Montreal Museum of  
Fine Arts*





- BG:** The megaphone is a symbol of delivering news or words of importance. In the drawings, I would use the megaphone coming out of the stomach or the back. The body was trying to say different things. The megaphone comes up again in the recent work *Do You Know How Long It Takes for Any One Voice To Reach Another*.
- JB:** I want to go back to the installations, because in all of them you created environments that were adapted to existing spaces already lived in, and the basic proportions were those that could contain the human body. The figure was always implied. Then the next body of work was the figure itself—the Swimmers.
- BG:** The passage did imply the body. That was my point of departure, the symbol of passage really moving in a shifting way from one situation to another. I often look back at my sketchbooks and see things I wrote down but wasn't able to push forward. I didn't understand then how to get them to work. But sometimes, years later, there are things I can bring out.
- JB:** It is only years later that you think of these relationships. But the ground is already laid.
- BG:** It is awful when the cycle stops and you have to . . .
- JB:** . . . a body of work reaches its natural conclusion—sometimes an exhibition does that.
- BG:** At an exhibition, first of all, you see the work differently than in the studio. The work is on its own and in another space. Hopefully, it's a space that the work has a good rapport with. Believe me. Then you know. You get some strength out of that.
- JB:** You had the biggest smile on your face as you were saying that. I could feel the sheer pleasure when that happens. But what happens when you come back to the studio? Can you describe that?
- BG:** A lot depends on how the work is presented. It can give me the push I need for the next work, but it doesn't come whole. It comes as a tiniest hint of probability and will very much change in the process.
- JB:** Is it a difficult moment when you decide the work is finished and it goes out into the world?
- BG:** Yes. I say to myself, "I could have pushed that further." I always feel I can go further. I always want to go further. Whether or not I can is another thing. Sometimes, in wanting to go further, you work so much on something you destroy it.



*this page:*

**Untitled (Swimmer), 1981**

Graphite and coloured chalks  
on wove paper

50.4 x 65.9

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

**Moving Towards Fire, 1983**

Oil, coloured chalks and  
graphite on three sheets of thin  
wove paper

291 x 108

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*Photo by Brenda Dereniuk*





- JB:** How do you decide? How do you know?
- BG:** The best way I know is if it's left in the studio for a while. I walk away and come back, and over a period of time I get the feeling, "OK, I've done the best I can." And also, not to have to work for a deadline.
- JB:** Because the process has to take as long as it takes? You've always had the courage to change things when something wasn't working. You added that piece of paper if you had to, you erased it and started over. Why wouldn't you just abandon it?
- BG:** Nothing ever comes for me on the first lines or effort. It is the erasing that is as much a part of the work as the pencil or oil stick. I found the paper that is just so right for that—Geofilm. The paper itself is sort of like skin.
- JB:** That was when you were working on the Swimmer series in the early 1980s, after a few years of soaking regular paper in turpentine, trying to make it transparent and making yourself sick in the process. In these very concentrated years between 1978 and 1982, a lot of things happened. Not only the site-specific works and the development of the idea of a passage, but Roger closing his gallery in 1979.
- BG:** When Roger closed the gallery, I tried for a year to be on my own. I found it impossible to have people come into the studio. France Morin was opening a gallery, and I was with her for two years. Then, of course, the project at la Cité, *Aurora Borealis*, came about with René [Blouin]. He decided he was going to open a gallery and he asked me to join. At that time, in 1985, I was already showing in Toronto with Jared [Sable].
- JB:** With the *Aurora Borealis* project, for the first time in a while you had the opportunity to do an installation.
- BG:** The space that I got was just perfect. The air ducts were, to me, like gigantic arteries. I was pleased to get such a good space. A space where you weren't interrupted. If I had a space like that now, it would be more difficult. Maybe I want so much more.
- JB:** Were the Swimmers something that was in your mind for a long time? I remember your telling me that the impetus for these Swimmer images came from the near drowning of someone close to you.
- BG:** It took a long time before it found a way to come out. What happens is that finally some idea



comes to mind. It chooses its own medium. For me, it is very much a matter of trying again and again and again. And in the trying and erasing and washing out, it becomes part of the medium.

**JB:** The Swimmers took you back to working two-dimensionally after having spent six years out of the studio taking on the challenge of huge spaces and making them your own. How do you think now about that pulling back into the studio and drawing?

**BG:** I got to a point where I had said what I had to say in those spaces. I got very involved with the Swimmers. One body is trying to save another. It wasn't always the negative. In the Swimmers, there was always the dual side of swimming. How we can't do without water. Water is our life, but it can take you away also.

**JB:** I remember all those privileged hours a few years ago that I spent looking through the drawers in your studio, feeling as though I was in someone's closet where I shouldn't be. You would say, "There they are," and you would either walk out or go to the other side of the studio and start working. Among the many things I came across, including some early works you had forgotten about, was a series of precursors to the large transparent Swimmer drawings. They were quite different in scale and opaque—more like depictions than the large more generic figures in the Swimmer series that are best known.

**BG:** After I got the Geofilm in a big roll, I realized that there was the water, the transparency, I had been looking for.

**JB:** Maybe because of their expansiveness, fragility and transparency, there was almost a feeling of liberation in those drawings, despite that fact that there was a lot of struggle going on.

**BG:** I hope so. I like that idea.


**JB:** At the time, people said that you had returned to the figure. But the figure was always there.

**BG:** The figure never left the work. It was always related. Everything demands its own method, its own means. I do the best I can to pick the medium that is going to best match what is going to finally come out.

**JB:** You started to work with the horizontal figure in the Swimmer series. Did *Moving Towards Fire* for *Aurora Borealis* allow you to move more directly into the Carbon drawings? I'm thinking of how the horizontal figure comes to dominate.







*this page:*

**Bent Figure with  
Megaphone, 1988**

Mixed media on mylar

153 x 108

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

**Untitled (Carbon Series),  
1986**

Graphite, oil and oil stick on  
wove paper

47.3 x 59.5

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

**BG:** The Carbon series started with an actual trauma I went through, but then it became familiarized in readings of the traumas around the world. You take the news, or anything terrible that's going on, and somehow or other at a particular time these things connect, and it seems strong enough to try and do something.

**JB:** That seemed to happen particularly between 1986 and 1989, through the Distorted Events series. You had the figures on the table, the iron bars. And also in the Interrogation series. Were these works inspired by any particular political events?

**BG:** There seemed to be such a surge of inhumanity. I cope with it through the drawings. I never feel that there are any lessons there of any kind. I don't expect it's going to change anything. For so long in my early life, I never was aware of what was going on in the world. I was in a state of deep freeze. Finally, when I became aware, I thought the least I could do was to know and read about these things. The best I can do is to make myself aware. If it transfers through me, even better.

**JB:** Around the same time as the Carbon series and the Distorted Events were the Steel Notes. They were sculptures and yet they had the improvisational quality of drawings. This was also the moment when quotations from texts by Artaud, Beckett and Carolyn Forché appeared in the work.

**BG:** Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi also. As I was reading, I would underline different things that were important to me. Recently, I did a sound piece on Beckett, *Bound Voices*.

**JB:** You've talked in the past about the process of making work as being a wordless struggle, that it is not about language. Then you found certain authors that had a language for . . .

**BG:** . . . they moved me so powerfully that it moved into the drawings. I came to understand how I could combine the two.

**JB:** When you found the magnets, materially they had a similar meaning for you.

**BG:** There is a power in magnets. It is a living thing. Magical.

**JB:** Its force is always there, and yet those things you made could fall apart at any moment.

**BG:** When you place a magnet on a piece of steel, sometimes you can't push it off. But within that force, there is a fragility. It's like a drawing without glass on it. You can mush it around.



**JB:** “Mushing around” is a nice way of describing what you often do. You always leave us your traces, your evidence of the “mushing around.” Just the way you moved magnets and iron filings around in the Steel Notes, you also often work and rework your drawings. You are leaving evidence of things that might be mistakes—of the struggle to get to what you want.

**BG:** The evidence I leave there is partly conscious and partly unconscious.

**JB:** Is it the same thing when you’re drawing and the limb is moving, or the line that describes the limb is moving, toward the edge of the paper? You just tack on another piece of paper. Do you like that feeling of evidence?

**BG:** I like the fact that it seems to be alive. Not everything is a blueprint.

**JB:** How do your travels and the photographs you take or collect come into the work?

**BG:** There was the trip to the Dominican Republic in 1992. Essentially, it was supposed to be a week’s holiday. I took a lot of photographs, not thinking of how I could use them. We were near the ocean. On top of a cliff were a whole series of trees. The trees that came close to the edge had their roots hanging down. I took a lot of photographs of that. They became the series called Nerves. I related to them immediately as nerves. I took other photographs where the roots weren’t so fine, and I’m thinking of those now as arteries.

**JB:** So, you moved from the figure to the interior of the body in the *Mémoire du corps* series begun the same year.

**BG:** Yes. The bones, the heart, the nerves, the spine.

**JB:** I have often thought about your use of the photograph in this work of the early 1990s. Not only as source imagery—as you collect tons of images that lie dormant in the studio for years—but more of the way you increasingly used the photograph as a kind of ground, like the tarpaulin or even the vest was a ground. It was a found object that already had something in it which you pulled out. The photographs of van Gogh’s bathtub or the ribs of prehistoric animals or the forlorn iron bed or the kiln. . . . You have this imprint that you then draw out.

**BG:** Images surround us through the media. I connect on a gut level. I tear them out, and then at one point they connect with something in me, and then it starts. I also take a lot of photographs with my automatic camera, and I found that the medium of Cronaflex was a point of departure. I could add right onto the Cronaflex image. It was very flexible.



*this page:*

**Untitled (La mémoire du corps), 1993**

Oil pastel, graphite, and  
adhesive tape on mylar

63.5 x 97.2

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

**Untitled (La mémoire du corps), 1995**

Oil stick over gelatin silver  
print on mylar

161.3 x 115.8

*Photo by Richard-Max*

*Tremblay, courtesy Galerie*

*René Blouin, Montreal*





**JB:** Cronaflex is a material that has the transparency of Geofilm and the waxy surface. It's not opaque like photographic paper.

**BG:** You can also see the dot system of the image really clearly.

**JB:** The image is already broken down. It's clearly already in another stage. It doesn't have such a direct relationship with the subject that is being photographed.

**BG:** Yes. That's very true. When I take the photograph, I don't necessarily think I'm going to put this into Cronaflex. I take a lot of photographs, and as it happens some of them are realized. I'll have them for a couple of years. The Cronaflex is not a finished photograph, which I like. It leaves me a lot of space to work.

**JB:** Your collected images are like those other collections in the studio—the hairy piles of iron filings, stones, the odd desiccated dead bird, the little shrunken gloves. . . . There have been times we talked to each other, when I'd call and I'd say, "Hi, how are you doing, Betty?" and you'd say, "I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know where I am. I can't tell you."

**BG:** Those are times when I'm very anxious.

**JB:** But are those the times when you absorb those piles around you, look back into your notebooks?

**BG:** It forces you into looking everywhere in the studio.

**JB:** Looking through your notebooks, there were these moments when I would say to myself, "I recognize this." For example, I found a little drawing of a spine, and you'd called it *Spine*, done fifteen years before you made a spine.

**BG:** The strange part is, lately I'm thinking of a collapsed passage, and I was looking through my notebooks, and there it was, ten years ago, the same thing. It's extraordinary. The notebooks are important to me. I'll check them out when I need some kind of push. Looking, I find things I might feel capable of working with now.

**JB:** Do you ever have a moment when you look back and you find something and you say, "That was a good idea, why didn't I do it?"

**BG:** I never ask why I didn't do it, because I couldn't do it. All I could do was write it down, but I couldn't go further.

- JB:** How did the image of the bathtub occur?
- BG:** I first saw the photograph of bathtubs from the asylum where van Gogh was. All these tubs were lined up. Every person had left part of themselves in it. Their skin. It was also like a birth. I worked on the image for a long time.
- JB:** More recently, you've made large drawings with the figure and the spiral.
- BG:** The Pieces of Time works. In the spirals, I saw the figures caught up at a particular moment in time. Not having completed their cycle. I'm not finished with it. There is more I want to say. How time works. There are some issues that I want to deal with that I can't say in drawings, and I have to use three-dimensional pieces.
- JB:** In the *Mémoire du corps* and the Nerves series, you also introduced objects right into the drawing, sometimes outside of the frame.
- BG:** When that's possible, I like it very much. I went to a plumbing shop to look for some pipes and I found this rusted steel object. It is like a large pendulum. I had it cast. I was able to use it with a framed drawing. I used the pendulums for *Do You Know How Long It Takes for Any One Voice To Reach Another*, and I'm using one now for a new piece. So it works out from the drawing and back in again. When I feel that the drawing won't be strong enough, I seem to move towards the objects. I find a certain strength in that medium. Right now, the piece with the pendulum that I'm working on is called *The Link Could End at Any Moment*. The phrase has been in my notebook a long time. I developed it into a sculptural piece.
- JB:** Among the many things that anyone looking at it could begin to think about, the "link that could end at any moment" is our own lives, our mortality. If we lived our lives thinking that, we would be more vital, I suppose, but it would be unbearable also. I connect this with the *Mémoire du corps* series because we see in it the magnificence of all that is going on in our organic being, from the cells to the nerve endings. The images that come out of this are about both loss and vitality at once. And so a photograph, an object, all those things collected in the studio . . .
- BG:** . . . they're waiting. It gives me energy to know that there's something waiting.
- JB:** There are things in the studio that have been waiting a long time.
- BG:** One day, they'll just come over my shoulder. "The link could end at any moment" was written ten years ago in my notebooks.





**JB:** There are two kinds of note-taking going on. The notations in the books, sketches and phrases, and the physical notes, the accumulated objects in your studio.

**BG:** They are notes on the wall and tables. That's a nice phrase: "notes on the wall." If I get hold of a phrase I like, I fill ten pages. I repeat it until I can finally pull it out. I see it as perseverance without any guarantees.

**JB:** You begin a project with a clear idea, but you allow that idea to take you somewhere else. You are willing to take the next step as a leap into the void.

**BG:** That's for sure.

**JB:** Each time is another leap.

**BG:** Each time is another lifetime.

**La mémoire du corps XX,**

1993

Oil stick, wax, charcoal, wash  
and metal rods on mylar

121.8 x 184.8

Art Gallery of Ontario

*Some years ago, Betty Goodwin showed me a tiny, shrunken kid glove that a friend had given to her. A pair had gone through the wash inadvertently, their form somehow becoming more human, more organic in the process. This tiny, brittle glove appeared strangely suspended in time, relic-like.*

*In 1996, while preparing an exhibition, I visited the Polish artist Mirosław Balka in Otwock, near Warsaw. Walking with him, discussing the history of the place, I came across another shrivelled kid glove on the ground. This one had been transformed by the elements and abandoned amidst the remaining headstones in a Jewish cemetery, now a desolate expanse of sand on the edge of the neighbouring town.*

*I carried this miniature glove, as fragile as ancient parchment, back to Toronto, and, some months later, found the courage to give it to Betty. A few grains of sand spilled from the fingers onto the studio floor as it passed hands.*

*These little gloves—the white pair given to Betty more than twenty years ago, and the hardened black one I found—have moved around the studio the way all her objects do: in categories, in new arrangements, in changing relationships to each other, to works in progress, and to those made years ago which she has kept.*

*Today, the pair of white gloves sits waiting on a little metal shelf on the studio wall, a sort of altar like those she arranged stones on in her recent drawings. The black glove is placed in front of a small reproduction of a photograph of roots, a nest-like tangle that provided the ground image for so many of her *Mémoire du corps* drawings in the early 1990s. It has found a home.*



## AFTERWORD

# Surely She's Seen Me Looking at Them . . .

*by Rober Racine*

*At the invitation of Lesley Johnstone, I wrote the text which follows in 1988 for Vanguard magazine. Rereading it ten years later, I experience once again the pleasure felt when looking at Betty Goodwin's work. But a real source of delight today is that Betty Goodwin is still with us, alive and creative, sensitive to the slightest tremor unsettling our world, free—a magician, an artist. Her work is with me every day, a constant inspiration in my life.*

**Porteur**, 1986–1987  
Graphite, oil pastel and wash  
on mylar  
226 x 213.4  
Art Gallery of Ontario

This is the third time I've come to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to see Betty Goodwin's exhibition. Spanning a period of sixteen years (1971–1987), the works are exhibited in six different spaces. Each room offers a theme, a trace, a manner, a tone or an obsession of the artist. Looking at all of the works, I realize to what extent Goodwin is an essayist. That is to say she *essays* or tries her hand at different disciplines, materials, techniques and forms of expression in order to capture the greatest density. Each essay, each take (as in Take One, Take Two in filmmaking or the recording studio) allows her to probe a world, a life. Through drawing, printmaking, photography, architecture, sculpture or in the assemblage of various textures, she attempts to understand and experiment, to feel and touch the reality of her methods. She has recourse to them, listening to them. She collaborates with them as a friend. This is what most struck me when I first saw the Vests, the Tarpaulins, *The Clark Street Project*, *Two Figures with Metal Shelf*, the *In Berlin* project, the Swimmers, Carbons, Passages, Notes and other variations.



One can find, in these rooms, articles of clothing, dwellings, tracks and what could be tools that presage the arrival of mysterious characters. Beings come from elsewhere. Who are they? Recent arrivals of ghosts . . . I'm not quite sure. The disturbance they provoke is as great, if not greater than that we experience when confronted with ascertaining their provenance. This elsewhere, these sites—from whence do they come? What are they? Knowing Betty Goodwin, I have only to ask her. She would no doubt answer: "Well," and, smiling, prompt me to consult Yolande Racine's catalogue or merely to return to the museum for a fourth time to begin to answer the question. The idea of the catalogue is not a bad one.

I am sitting on a visitor's bench in the museum's first large hall. Before me is *Two Figures with Metal Shelf*. Beside me, tied to a solid white rope, is the exhibition catalogue. I take it. I can hear visitors walking through the other rooms, audio-guides fastened to their ears. I open the catalogue to the first pages. I see the photograph of the artist superimposed with a quotation by Bertolt Brecht, an author she particularly enjoys: "Overnight, the universe has lost its center and now in the morning it has any number of centers. Now any point in the universe may be taken as a center. Because, suddenly there's plenty of room."

Room? Yes, this afternoon there is plenty of room here in the hall. It is a luxury to be alone to look at an exhibition, to be in true communication with a work of art. Just as it is essential for an artist to be alone in order to create, so the spectator has the right to a share of this solitude. This whole place, all this space which houses Betty Goodwin's work, reminds me that occasionally sites beget sites, just as beings engender beings. Beings can also create sites just as sites can permit beings to come into being and exist. What I am thinking is so true (to my chagrin) that a group of visitors walk (are born[e]) into the space. Delighted, these well-dressed ladies are drawn towards the work. They approach *Il y a certainement quelqu'un qui m'a tuée* then move on towards *Red Sea*. They become transfixed. Their heads move up and down, from left to right. They perform a strange dance before the sheets of Transpagra—the dance of the gaze. Even these visitors seem to emerge from some other world. Like Betty Goodwin's subjects. Then two, three, four couples enter from the small room containing the Vests, the Tarpaulins and *The Clark Street Project*. They are all wearing audio-guide headphones. They stand, unmoving, before the works, watching and listening, adjusting the volume. They walk backwards, advance even closer in, then return to their point of departure. From these 'receivers' (that in fact do not receive anything), I can hear snatches of voices. Acute, nasal sounds resonate softly in the large, almost empty hall. Again, mini-speech emerges from elsewhere, from an object and a site: the tape recorder. This object will reappear further on, transformed as if by magic; it is the megaphone of *In Berlin, a Triptych*. All of these voices, these tiny escaping, vibrating lives, resemble the subjects delivered of Betty Goodwin. Without realizing it perhaps, the spectators act out the works they are looking at. They do not do it literally but on the level of a kind of fallout of density from the imaginary.

There is always an intensity emitted by a person looking at a work by Betty Goodwin. They are searching out the utterance, the sign, the life pulse of the subject drawn by the artist. At times, people seem to want 'to assist' the beings inscribed in the drawings. There is a solidarity, a complicity between the spectator and the work. Even when certain people feel the anguish of the characters depicted before them, they are invariably drawn to them. People have wept looking at *Carbon*. Why? There is no answer to this question. The work is simply human. Like it or not, there is a life-force. And that is what is important.

Perhaps as a result of people around me, strolling down the thread of voices commenting on the works, I recall the 'project' the artist produced for *Parachute* [magazine]. One can see a person bent at a 45° angle (in the attitude of a swimmer awaiting the starter's pistol) spitting up black, night, silence, pain, ink. Above this obscure evacuation, one can read a phrase by Karl Kraus: "Only a tongue stricken with cancer emits novel formations." I am referring to *Black Words*. The words are always black, regardless of whether they speak of whiteness, the void or the invisible. The final words of Karl Kraus' quote cause me to dream of "novel formations." Betty Goodwin's subjects are novel formations, ones that express the desire to be there and a will to exist. These are human configurations, not groupings but biological forms of flesh and blood.

When one reads the description of the materials the artist used in *Study for Carbon*, for example, one retains the impression of discovering new materials, new skin: charcoal powder, wax, oil pastel, pastel, graphite and adhesive tape on Transpagra. This quasi-alchemical 'mixture' engenders discarded bodies, the butt-end of limbs. Betty Goodwin draws on paper with names that make me dream: vellum, Transpagra, Ozafilm, Geofilm, transfer paper—pure poetry—translucent flesh readily receiving human forms. These creatures are at once interior and exterior, as if passions, lacerations, confusions, life, death and interior tensions appeared on a *scanner*. Betty Goodwin's scanner. She reveals the interior of the human form through the aegis of an apparently exterior image. The subjects are haunted by a monitoring, a cry—blind, strangled or gasping.

Their speech is incarnate; it finds shape. It is now a profusion of black, a sweep of white, an ear and then a head. We forget which dimension we find ourselves in. As long as I remain in this museum hall, I know where I am. But if I found myself in a work by Betty Goodwin, where would I be? In water or in air, in colour? Within or without? Between heaven and earth?

I turn and look at *Elle a perdu son équilibre*. The title informs us that the subject is a woman and has an equilibrium. What harkens the drawing back to me is not as explicit. I still don't know where I am if I am in the drawing. All I can deduce is that I am on the subject's left. Unless I am in front of the drawing instead . . . this hesitation derives from an imbalance, a lack of points of reference. There is an interchange of dimensions. I continue to feel these insinuated meanings, these interlaced perceptions of objects and beings. There

page 74:

**Il y a certainement**

**quelqu'un qui m'a tuée,**

1985

Charcoal, oil, acrylic and wash

on wove paper mounted on

fabric

61 x 91

Art Gallery of Ontario

page 75:

**Untitled (Two Figures/**

**Carbon Series), 1985**

Pastel on paper

51 x 71.4

Art Gallery of Ontario







is a shifting and displacement in time. Everything is fleeting, flashes, then passes on.

Once again I watch people moving about the room. They walk, stop, move on and bend in front of the works. People are searching, reading, receiving. I watch them receive the signals from Betty Goodwin's characters. They are communicating; there is an interchange between them. Barely audible androgynous voices emanate from the ears of the visitors; the very image of an inky groan, froth and blood gushing ceaselessly from the artist's subjects, causes me to reflect on the nature of communication in these works. Is this communication masculine or feminine? Is it human or animal? [Is it] in colour or in black and white? Is it from the left or from the right? Does it ascend or does it descend? Sonorous or musical? I have no idea. Betty Goodwin's works ask all these questions. Perhaps these are Karl Kraus' "novel formations," Betty Goodwin's *Black Words*. Who knows? There exists communication within each work as there exists a call from one work to another. The curator, Yolande Racine, has shown a great understanding of this by placing the series *Do You Know How Long It Takes for Any One Voice To Reach Another* in different rooms. The subjects call out to one another. They will never be answered unless some vigilant visitor, a messenger, arrives to provide an echo.

The halls in the Museum of Fine Arts are resonant with the drawn-out cries of Betty Goodwin's subjects, resounding with the passage of visitors laden with audio-guides. Everything holds together. The titles of the works respond to the commentary of the audio-guide. People ambulate happily, troubled or deeply moved in the face of personages at times decapitated, warped, arched, coiled and intertwined. Creatures at once man, child and woman, wise, aroused and asleep, exist in a strange world where the sexual act borders on assassination, everything pushed to the extreme limits of excess. We are on the cusp of the checkmate, the fall from grace, drama. The subjects take each other in their arms, let themselves go. They shout each other's heads off, bodies off. They float in an embrace, emerge, regenerate and burst, torn to pieces. They appear to be suffering and we would like to be with them, to share with them. It is the ultimate paradox of love. As if to say: 'Look upon the beauty of the starry sky' only to be set upon and raped. How can one understand these antagonistic forces that reject agony? What should we think when faced with *Carbon 1* and *2*, or a title as disquieting as *Il y a certainement quelqu'un qui m'a tuée*?

The final feminine *e* in the word *tuée* (killed) troubles me. Bodies do violence to each other and this violence takes shape, assumes life, colours, textures and dimensions. Violence occurs, yet it makes those looking on happy. But there is not only aggression, acts of brutality. No. There is, somewhere, a great tenderness, an animal softness that is real and uncivilized, a quasi-ancestral naturalness one normally finds among animals. Surely we were akin to them *once* . . . before. Before when? Before who? Before codes, laws and interdicts 'in the name of politeness and civility.' Are Betty Goodwin's subjects civil? Are they crying out or howling? Are they joining or copulating? Do we consider their parents? Do they have

families? Finally, all this is of no importance. What is of importance is what they emanate. They possess a force which wakens us to form, to the beauty of natural movement, the beauty of taking the other's body and biting an ear off if it doesn't hear our cry of love. To have the power to make the other understand that their face can be erased if they do not look at us enough. Betty Goodwin creates characters that continually play straight or are double-dealing with themselves. They fall on themselves, constantly under their own surveillance. They love and hate each other passionately. They demonstrate that we must touch one another, meld into each other. An end to this polite distance, this extreme civil infirmity. Let us be natural, to excess, for Betty Goodwin's work is concerned with excess. Perhaps this is what interrupts, touches, provokes and overwhelms spectators: a refound excess in our relationship with the other.

The paradox here, and it is the artist's challenge, derives from the fact that the characters are always placed in extreme situations. Will they drown? Can they support each other? I am thinking of the *Porteur*. Do they want to devour each other, or kiss? Is this carnage of an emotional origin? Maybe. In any case, if there is an affront, an underwater or open-air stabbing, a strangulation or 'leap-frog' assault, it is always in order to show us 'as clear as a picture' (never wise) the tensions and contradictions of human nature. We can't escape it; they won't escape it. But those characters had to come out of somewhere. Did they ever have a place to live, a house? Yes. These characters we repeatedly see once wore clothes, rented an apartment, went to school, took notes, made sketches and took vacations by the riverside. All this exists. All this has been shown, has been seen. Their clothes are the Vests. Their apartment is the one in *The Mentana Street Project*. They studied in silence in Room 205, P.S.1, in New York. That's where they learned to draw and to write. Their works are the copybooks in *Esquisses*. They bathed in the Niagara River in Artpark, New York, the very place where *River Piece* was shown. It is in that *bed* that they dried themselves. Then they booked *Passage in a Red Field* to finally arrive *In Berlin*. That was where they *revealed* themselves. They have been in constant revolution ever since (1983), overthrowing the gaze, scrambling our way of seeing the human body and its relationship with others. They fly, float, swim and carry; they weave a loose network of human complicity that excludes the heraldry of the pose, of fashion. They steadfastly short-circuit the transparent bluff of codified appearances.

I close the catalogue and put it down. I get up and slowly cross the large hall of the *In Berlin* project, passing in front of *Swimmers* floating on its vellum. People are moving around me. They move behind the long black passage leading to the megaphone. It is a troubling object, alone encapsulating the problem of communication. We are dealing with a severed communication. The voice is kill or be killed. Yes. Surely someone has killed this voice, this communication. Between the pinkish-red loudspeaker and the aluminum cone-shaped megaphone, there appears an ear, the auricle turned towards the ceiling, the sky, the



universe. It exists in the invisible transmission of sound that is merely suggested. It is evident that this ear was spewn up by the person in *Do You Know How Long It Takes for Any One Voice To Reach Another*. It is a left ear . . . an ear of the heart . . . the devil's ear . . . an ear to the impossibility of speech? To have only one ear is like a disconnected microphone. What is disturbing is to see people with headsets on, watching and listening to a silent microphone. Their ears do not pick up the draughts of voices. The megaphone's balanced ear emits nothing, a white sound. There should be plenty to say, to hear. But the voice of the museum, as spoken by the guards, indicates that it is approaching 5 P.M. The museum, the audio-guides and the titles all speak. To varying degrees, the characters who people Betty Goodwin's works seem to be waiting for us to join them amid these inadvertent utterances. In the hall there is a mini-network of murmurs journeying for one last experience of *Carbon, Esquisses*, the Tarpaulins, the Swimmers and *Porteur*. The museum's last call has activated them. They make haste to see again, reread and recommunicate.

Betty Goodwin's subjects and sites remain there, in a sort of 'in-between vision', a disturbing region where the dimensions seem to remember, to recollect. This is a realm where faces originate with emotions, where the poses spring from psychological behaviour. This is a world where weight and weightlessness are confounded with the gravity of gravitation, whose waters people have no doubt been drowned in. Because we have been seen there, we eventually disappear. What remains of our passage is the woven night of *Black Words*.

*This text was originally published in both French and English in Vanguard (vol. 17, no. 3, Summer 1988) on the occasion of the exhibition Betty Goodwin: Œuvres de 1971 à 1987 / Works from 1971 to 1987 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Translated by Robert McGee.*

**Elle a perdu son équilibre,**

1985

Oil pastel and charcoal on  
pieced mylar

104.2 x 194.5

Art Gallery of Ontario









# Chronology 1923–1998

*Compiled by Anne-Marie Ninacs*

This chronology has been established from research conducted at the E.P. Taylor Research Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; the library of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' library and archives; the médiathèque of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; the arts library of the Université du Québec à Montréal; Galerie René Blouin, Montreal; and Betty Goodwin's personal archives. A comprehensive version of the chronology can be found at the E.P. Taylor Library and Archives of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Betty Goodwin's studio,  
Avenue Coloniale, Montreal,  
1994  
*Photo by Geoffrey James*

Taped interviews with Betty Goodwin and other comments and writings by the artist are set in regular type.

Critical commentary from published sources such as reviews in newspapers, magazines and exhibition catalogues are set in *italic*.

Events and significant developments in Betty Goodwin's life and her career as an artist are set in **bold**. Solo exhibitions are noted with an asterisk\*.

Quotations in French have been translated by Donald McGrath, and are noted with a dot •.

Full citations for the sources (published and unpublished) from which the quotations below have been taken can be found in the bibliography, and are indicated in parentheses at the end of each quotation. Sources that are not listed in the bibliography come from the archives of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts or from Betty Goodwin's personal archives.

1923

Betty Roodish is born, on March 19, in Montreal, Quebec, the only child of Anglophone Jewish parents, Clare Edith and Abraham Roodish (Rudich). Her father, a Romanian-born vest-maker, is the owner and manager of Rochester Vest, a clothing contracting business.

A work's origin can never be located in the studio. . . . I would say rather that everything really begins the day we are born. A work is always the result of an accumulation of things that belong strictly to our own existence. In fact, it is the more or less curious juxtaposition of these various elements with external events. (• X. Meilleur, October–December 1989)

1932

Goodwin's father dies suddenly. Her mother takes on the management of the clothing business.

*Betty lost her father when she was very young, and she was an only daughter. Her father was a clothing contractor. They were poor. Pieces of clothes, vests among them, were hanging everywhere. There was always this fear that the father wouldn't come back, and one day it happened.* (X. Roger Bellemare in Freedman, Winter 1984)



1940

Goodwin completes high school. Since art is the only subject that engages her during these years of education, her encouraging mother hires teachers who come to the house to teach Goodwin drawing and painting.

*She never went to art college because, as she says, 'I always did so badly in school.' (It appears that she did terribly during her '12 miserable years' of education.)* (X. Mays, 24 April 1993)

I never went to a formal art school but I did look a lot. That was my training. Going to museums, going to galleries and looking and looking. Realizing what I liked and what I didn't like. And there are a lot of things that changed. There are certain things I used to think were great and I don't any more. It works the other way, too. About two years ago I walked into a room at the Museum of Modern Art [in New York] where there were three Pollocks and they blew me away. . . . [Before

that I was] not interested and not really understanding the significance of it. What I saw in New York were the ones with a myriad of drippings and layering. They looked as though a lot of consciousness had gone into them. There were three of them in the room and a bench. I sat down and it was almost like meditating. It was very, very beautiful. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

**After high school, Goodwin studies design at the Valentine's Commercial School of Art in Montreal.**

*Then she worked as a layout artist for Steinberg's and designed boxes—shoe boxes, chocolate boxes—until she discovered that she was more interested in fine art than in design.* (II. Lind, 1986)

## **1945**

**April 30: Betty Roodish marries Martin Goodwin, whom she had met at a formal dance. An engineer and builder, Goodwin had studied at McGill University.**

*I can't tell you much about Martin. He's always slipping out just when someone arrives at the strict little front door to see Betty. He's an engineer by training, I believe, and a renovator by trade. . . . He studiously stays out of the art-world limelight that's rarely off her. On the odd time I've seen them together, they've always seemed more like college kids, head over heels in love and delight with each other, than the Golden Anniversarians they will shortly become.* (X. Mays, 24 April 1993)

## **1946**

**Birth of Paul, the Goodwins' only child.**

## **1947**

**March 21–April 20: Goodwin shows two contour drawings at the 64th Annual Spring Exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. This is Goodwin's first exhibition of work. Catalogue published.**

**July 17–August 17: Goodwin participates in the *Exposition de la jeune peinture canadienne* held in Prague as part of the *Festival de la jeunesse démocratique*. Mounted as an effort in aid of world peace, the international event is fiercely condemned as communist by Catholic youth associations. Paul-Émile Borduas, Fritz Brandtner, Robert La Palme, Arthur Lismer, John Lyman, Goodridge Roberts, Anne Savage, Marian Scott and others constitute the Visual Arts committee. (Ray Afflek, Bill Armstrong, Marcel Barbeau, Léon Bellefleur, Fernand Bonin, Ghitta Caiserman,**



Edmundo Chiodini, Peter Doucet, Albert Dumouchel, Marcelle Feron, Pierre Garneau, Pierre Gauvreau, Betty Goodwin, Robert La Palme, Larry McLaughlin, Robert Montminy, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Madeleine Desroches Noiseux, Pierre Ouvrard, David Pollock and others.)

#### 1949

**April 20–May 15:** *66th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

#### 1950

There was a whole group around the gang of Borduas, there. You know, they saw themselves as creating history here in Quebec. I never felt part of it . . . it never occurred to me, to tell you the truth. I was working in my own particular way, isolated and I never had the desire to enter into any of that. (III. Thériault interview, 1983)

*Salon de la jeune peinture canadienne*, Galerie Agnès Lefort, Montreal, Quebec (Léon Bellefleur, Fritz Brandtner, Jean Dallaire, Albert Dumouchel, Paterson Ewen, Pierre Gauvreau, Betty Goodwin, Anne Kahane, Fernand Leduc, Agnès Lefort, Louis Muhlstock, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Marian Scott).

#### 1951

**Martin Goodwin is appointed to the National Research Council. The Goodwins move to Ottawa, Ontario, where they live for the next three years.**

In the '50s and '60s I drew a lot from the model and did very conventional still life and landscape (I don't mean that still life and landscape is conventional content, it was the way I painted them). During that time it was sheer perseverance that made me continue. I couldn't do anything else any better anyway. (Notes for a lecture at the University Art Association of Canada conference, November 1996)

**March 9–April 16:** *Graphic Art 1951: The Canadian Society of Graphic Art*, Art Gallery of Toronto (now Art Gallery of Ontario), Toronto, Ontario. Catalogue published.

#### 1954

**The National Research Council sends Martin Goodwin to Boston, where he settles with his family for a year.**

Boston was very interesting. It is there that I started looking at art. (III. Bradley interview, March 1998)

## 1955

**The Goodwins move back to Montreal.**

**April 2–May 1:** *72nd Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

## 1957

I just wasn't satisfied ever. . . . Very few pieces pleased me. A few show the bare beginnings of a link-up, but I couldn't recognize them. I had one thing going for me that was good—I was tenacious. (X. Freedman, Winter 1984)

**April 5–May 5:** *74th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 9–30:** *The Third Winnipeg Show*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Catalogue published.

## 1958

**February:** *9th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**March 28–April 27:** *75th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**September 5–September 16, 1959:** Goodwin travels to England, France, Holland, Spain, tours Italy by car extensively. She and Martin stay in Florence where she paints and studies. There she paints numerous still lifes, a few carnival scenes and portraits in an early-Cubist manner.

I had set up an easel and a little work area in the so-called living room and I did more still lifes. (III. Bradley interview, March 1998)

**Still Life**, c. 1958

Oil on canvas

113 x 63

*Photo courtesy Montreal*

*Museum of Fine Arts*



[I am] presently completing a year of concentrated work in Florence. In September I shall return to my home in Montreal. . . . This year in Europe has strengthened my work still further and I would very much like to have an exhibit at the museum in the near future. . . . Jeanne Rhéaume is very enthusiastic about my paintings and has encouraged me to write to you. (Letter to Edward Cleghorn, Director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 10 May 1959)

**November 8–30:** *The Fourth Winnipeg Show*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Catalogue published.

## **1959**

**April 3–May 3:** *76th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 7–30:** *The Fifth Winnipeg Show*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Catalogue published.

## **1960**

**February:** *11th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**April 8–May 8:** *77th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 12–30:** *The Sixth Winnipeg Show*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Catalogue published.

**December 16–January 8, 1961:** Goodwin exhibits with Oscar de Lall in a two-person show at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Gallery XII. She presents more than thirty paintings, most of which are still lifes and portraits.

I am trying to realize and express my personal vision of the world around me as vitally as possible. I want to use the elements of shapes, spatial relationships, rhythms, color, to build a structure in which a meaningful content and the objects in the painting possess an intense reality, revealing more than the visible. I want to obtain the very essence of their being in relation to my idea. (Press release from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 14 December 1960)



**1961**

**February:** *12th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**April 8–May 7:** *78th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 11–30:** *The Seventh Annual Winnipeg Show*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Catalogue published.

**1962**

**February:** *13th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**September 7–October 7:** Goodwin's first one-person exhibition in Montreal, at the Penthouse Gallery of the Crown Life Insurance building.\*



**Untitled, 1963**

Oil on masonite

15.3 x 20

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*This is the first time (out of five) that I have come back very disappointed from the small and charming Penthouse Gallery. . . . Betty Goodwin is a disappointment, and this is due mainly to her academic amateurism. . . . Another reason is her cumbersome influences. One could ask whether this painter is capable of producing less colourless and bland works. Goodwin is still at the stage of imitating famous painters: identifiable to varying degrees, shades of Cézanne, Renoir, Gauguin, Utrillo, Matisse, Seurat and Picasso file by before our eyes. And what is worse, of course, is that one sometimes detects more parody than imitation. However, it is a pleasure to see two of the landscapes (no. 8 and no. 4) in this exhibition. . . . In short, Betty Goodwin will, I believe, more successfully win our thoughtful sympathy when she escapes from her influences. (• VII. “Goodwin: à la manière de . . .” 15 September 1962)*

### 1963

**February:** *14th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**September:** Goodwin travels to the Greek Islands.

**October 19–November 2:** *Exhibition and Sale of Art by Contemporary, Professional Quebec Artists*, foyer of the ninth-floor restaurant, The T. Eaton Co. Ltd., Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 8–December 1:** *Canadian Group of Painters, Exhibition 1963–1964*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec, and Calgary Allied Arts Council, Calgary, Alberta (January 3–23, 1964). Catalogue published.

*I was glad to see old painters coming up with new ideas—I won't say old dogs learning new tricks—and new painters being invited to contribute. Here is . . . Betty Goodwin developing a new freedom and daring in her handling of the still life. (VIII. Ayre, November 1963)*

### 1964

**February:** *15th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**February 21–March 22:** *The Canadian Society of Graphic Art 31st Annual Exhibition*, two-section exhibition held at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario, and The Fine Art Gallery of the Toronto Public Library, Toronto, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**October 17–31:** *Exhibition and Sale of Art by Contemporary, Professional Quebec Artists*, foyer of the ninth-floor restaurant, The T. Eaton Co. Ltd., Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 6–29:** *Eighty-fifth Annual Exhibition* (Royal Canadian Academy of Arts), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec, and Sarnia Public Library and Art Gallery, Sarnia, Ontario (January 8–30, 1965). Catalogue published.

## 1965

**February 19–March 7:** Goodwin's second exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Gallery XII, this time in a two-person show with Eva Landori. Goodwin exhibits more than twenty paintings and drawings on the theme of the soul in limbo inspired by Chalom Anski's *The Dibbuk*.

*[Goodwin and Landori] share an absorption in the mystery of human existence and a visual language that is figurative yet abstract and summary. . . . Betty Goodwin draws too but the mass interests her more than the line and I would say she is essentially the painter. She scarcely differentiates her forms; anatomy concerns her no more than it does Jean Dubuffet or Jan Muller. She flattens them out, runs them together. She is conscious always of the human dilemma—the drama of *The Dibbuk*, the tragedy of 'Leavetaking', of 'The Trial'—but the individual is nameless, part of the crowd, a dissolving member of the eternal flux. It isn't however, a drab and hopeless tide, for Betty Goodwin's color is gorgeous.* (VIII. Ayre, 6 March 1965)

*Betty Goodwin's work, mostly vague and figural, depends on color also, but neither color, nor mass, nor line, nor space are clearly defined. This is mysticism by ambiguity, but it is difficult to say just how far it is intentional. I find this an oppressive art which satisfies neither visually, nor through communication. Interest remains limited to one's compassion for these ambiguous beings who seem to be in some sort of plight. One hopes for the sake of the artist that it is not simply the plight of living.* (VIII. Montbizon, 6 March 1965)

**Goodwin is elected to membership in The Canadian Society of Graphic Art.**

**March 16–April 4:** *Canadian Group of Painters Exhibition 1965*, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, and Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario (June 3–27). Catalogue published.

**Spring:** *The Canadian Society of Graphic Art 32nd Annual Exhibition*, Sarnia Public Library and Art Gallery, Sarnia, Ontario. Catalogue published.





**October 15–30:** *Exhibition and Sale of Art by Contemporary, Professional Quebec Artists*, Place Ville-Marie, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 12–December 12:** *86th Annual Exhibition* (Royal Canadian Academy of Arts), Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, and Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba (February 1–21, 1966). Catalogue published.

## 1966

**February:** *17th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**Spring:** *The Canadian Society of Graphic Art 33rd Annual Exhibition*, Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**Falling Figure**, 1965

Oil on canvas

104.6 x 120

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

I hereby swear as follows: 1) No more complaints about lack of recognition, prizes, etc. for me. 2) No more sorrows over recognition, prizes, etc. for others. 3) Just lots of hard work. All this, in return for special dispensation granted for me to-day. [Signed:] Betty Goodwin forever. Witnessed: Martin Goodwin. (Note in a scrapbook, 21 April 1966)

**October 14–29:** *Exhibition and Sale of Art by Contemporary, Professional Quebec Artists*, Royal Bank Building, Place Ville-Marie, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

## 1967

**March 3–26:** *The Canadian Society of Graphic Art 34th Annual Exhibition*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**May 5–20:** *Betty Goodwin : gouaches et dessins*, Gallery 23, Montreal, Quebec.\*

**November 4–19:** *Exhibition and Sale of Art by Contemporary, Professional Quebec Artists*, Royal Bank Building, Place Ville-Marie, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

## 1968

Dissatisfied by her work and discouraged by her lack of progress, Goodwin decides to limit her work to drawing, using only black and white. With the help of John Ivor Smith, she unofficially attends Yves Gaucher's etching class at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in Montreal.

At that time, it was possible to just enter the etching class during the day and I wasn't taking credit or anything. . . . It was great working in that class. Great to be a student. I liked drawing and learning about the techniques. Coming there, at that time in my life, I had more experiences, I learned the technique but I had something I could do with it. I could make use of it for what I wanted to say. I was there about two full days a week and, of course, I worked at home on the press I got and I began to do my own prints. It was very good for me because I never went to formal school and I got to enjoy that part of it, with the other students. I had never liked school—I was fairly miserable for the 12 years I went to school. So to go back into a class and find myself . . . sort of able to do everything, because at school it was just the opposite, it was a great experience. I loved that. (III. Thériault interview, 1983)

*The medium helped her develop a language that was much more meaningful to herself. . . . With etching you have lots of time to think as you are acting, while painting is a much more spontaneous medium. . . . I gave her everything that I could because she was the most worthy student that I had. And looking back on it, she was the most worthy student I've ever had. . . . It's not just the work. It's in the attitude, the commitment, the discipline and in the earnestness if you will.* (VIII. Yves Gaucher in Duncan, 6 February 1988)

**December:** Goodwin travels to Algarve, Portugal, and Tangier, Morocco. She takes numerous photographs of doors and weather-worn walls.

**December 7–31:** *The Canadian Society of Graphic Art 35th Annual Exhibition*, London Public Library and Art Museum, London, Ontario. Catalogue published.

## 1969

Unable to attain the results she is seeking in her drawings, Goodwin puts real objects directly through the etching press, starting with gloves. This new technique, informed by years of self-taught etching, develops into the Vest series and marks Goodwin's breakthrough onto the contemporary art scene.

I was making an etching of a glove on my plate, but no matter how I tried the drawing would not give me the reality of the glove. (VIII. H., 21 March 1970)

[The Vest series] was related to experiences that had been submerged. It was something I totally identify with, totally, and for that reason, it was a point of incredible satisfaction, and the starting point for everything else. (X. Freedman, Winter 1984)



Shortly after, Goodwin begins the Parcel series from packages she receives and puts through the press.

*People began sending Miss Goodwin vests to work with when her art began attracting admirers in Montreal. Often Miss Goodwin found the packages so interesting, she neglected to open them, instead choosing to turn them into art forms.* (VIII. Doran, 19 May 1973)

At this point I am doing a series of large prints, ranging from 17" x 20" to 22" x 28". I am using three techniques in various combinations: (1) the traditional method; (2) the transferring of the impress of selected objects to the plate, using the soft-ground medium; and (3) the transferring of photographs onto the plate, using kodalith film and silk screens. (II. Grant application, The Canada Council, 3 November 1969)

**November 6–December 7:** *5th Burnaby Print Show*, Burnaby Art Gallery, Burnaby, British Columbia, and circulated by the Extension department of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario (1970–1971). Catalogue published.

**November 20–21:** *Canadian Printmakers' Showcase*, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**December:** Goodwin receives a Canada Council Materials Grant.

## 1970

Keeping a *pied-à-terre* in Montreal, the Goodwins buy a house in Sainte-Adèle, Quebec, where Goodwin installs her printmaking equipment in the basement.

For the last three years I have been deeply committed to etching. . . . I was able to develop new methods of transferring an impression of soft objects to the surface of the copper plate, with very successful results. Now I want to spend more time searching out every means of improving these techniques, such as combining the use of photography and silkscreen with the etching medium. I am also doing multiples, but because of time limitations, I haven't been able to complete the editions. In order to accomplish the next stage in the direction which I embarked upon, it is essential that I be able to work intensely, free of all other commitments for at least a full year. Also, my work reached a point where it would be of inestimable value for me to see certain American workshops (Tamarind and Gemini, in Los Angeles; Collectors Press in San Francisco; etc.). (II. Grant application, The Canada Council, 4 November 1970)

**March 6–26:** *Canadian Graphics*, organized by The Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers and The Canadian Society of Graphic Art; exhibited at the City Hall Library, Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto, Ontario, and at the London Public Library and Art Museum, London, Ontario (April 1–30). Catalogue published.

**March 14–28:** *Etchings, Betty Goodwin, Gravures. The first exhibition of Goodwin's Vest series and other etchings of articles of clothing at Galerie 1640 in Montreal.\**

*What the prints in this exhibition show us is the imprint-image of cast-off garments, a vest, shorts, an ancient hat, pockets containing string and pins, the buttons and thread intact. A much more personal accounting than a drawing could give us and one which allows us to make our own assessment, free of the artist's conclusions. . . . To me they seemed like X-rays offering the shape and state of their recent inhabitants to view. A palpable reality over and above any literary interpretation. (VII. H., 21 March 1970)*

*Betty Goodwin's recent graphics on display at the Galerie 1640 betray some of the freshest thinking seen around town this season. . . . These are not, as drawing would be, a translation of shallow three dimensional forms into a two dimensional code. They are instead the expression of the formal possibilities created by compressing that shallow space. There is as well a vest which has been cast as sculpture and one actual vest stiffened in order to become sculpture. All the works in the show are enormously successful. (VIII. Bardo, 25 March 1970)*

**September 25–December 31:** *Second British International Print Biennale*, Bradford City Art Galleries and Museums, Bradford, England. Catalogue published.

**October 27–November 2:** *Canadian Printmakers' Showcase 1970*, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**November 12–December 7:** *The Twelfth Winnipeg Show*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Catalogue published.

## 1971

**February:** *Exhibition of Canadian Prints*, travelling exhibition sponsored by The Canadian Society of Graphic Art and held at The Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. The exhibition tours to San Francisco and to many cultural centres in the United States. Leaflet published.

**March 2–21:** Goodwin holds her first one-person exhibition in Toronto at Gallery Pascal, where she shows works from the Vest and Parcel series.\*

**Shirt IV, 1971**

Soft-ground etching on wove paper

95.4 x 71.9

Art Gallery of Ontario







**March 25–April 25:** *Ninety-first Annual Exhibition* (Royal Canadian Academy of Arts), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec, and the Confederation Centre, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (July 1–August 31). Catalogue published.

**April:** *New Montreal Sculpture / Nouvelle sculpture de Montréal*, Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Arthur Bardo (Beckett, Cadotte, Coward, Delavalle, Déry, Dutkewych, Goodwin, Lavoie, Morgan, Newman, Nolte, Pearson, Prent, Saxe, Sorensen and Vilder).

**May:** Goodwin joins a group of artists who challenge the Quebec government's visual arts policies and demand the creation of a provincial arts council. They point out the amateurism of the official competition which, they state, discredits the research done in the field of art.

**June:** In New York, Goodwin meets with Riva Castleman, Curator of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books at the Museum of Modern Art, who considers *Vest No. 2* and *Shirt No. 3* for acquisition.

Dear Miss Schwartz, Naturally, I was disappointed to hear . . . that the two prints I left with the Museum in June were not approved for purchase. Are you able to tell me why they were not accepted? I'm wondering whether some general policy decision eliminated the work from consideration or whether there were specific reasons relating directly to the work. I'm working on a series of new prints and casting in cement which I would like to submit for the consideration of the acquisition committee. Since I find slides inadequate, could you give me a specific date to bring my portfolio down? . . . (Letter to Alexandra Schwartz, Registration Assistant, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 25 October 1971)

**June:** *A Season in Retrospect*, Gallery Pascal, Toronto, Ontario (David Blackwood, Charles Daudelin, Betty Goodwin, Toni Onley, Gaston Petit, Robert Savoie, Guillermo Silva, John Snow and Roslyn Swartzman).

**June 23–August 15:** *Salon international de la gravure / Montréal 1971 / International Exhibition of Graphics*, organized by The Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers and the Canadian Society of Graphic Art, and exhibited at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**July:** With the support of a Canada Council Travel Grant, Goodwin visits Cirrus and Gemini print workshops in Los Angeles. Ken Tyler, head of Gemini, is impressed by her work and recommends it to Los Angeles dealer Margo Leavin. Goodwin extends her trip to include Vancouver.

It was most helpful to study the layout of these two workshops, their method of printing in silk screen, and to discuss the various techniques employed. Ken Tyler, the head of Gemini (and formerly technical director of Tamarind) was most impressed with the high quality of my work and the strong imagery used and felt that I held my own on the international scene. He recommended me to the Margo Leavin Gallery of L.A. (which handles the work of Rauschenberg, Stella, Johns, Hockney, Trova, etc.); Miss Leavin was equally enthusiastic, took six of my prints for display (some of which were subsequently sold from her gallery), and I am now in the process of arranging with her for a show. . . . In Vancouver I had very rewarding contacts with some artists and met also with the assistant curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery (in the absence of the curator herself), where I was very well received and one of my works was purchased. I also contacted Bau-Xi Gallery and as a result I am to have a show there in August, 1972. . . . Visits to the workshops were enlightening, but it was equally rewarding to make contact with other artists, museums and commercial galleries and to find them so ready to help me further my career. (Grant report, The Canada Council, 23 December 1971 )

**September–October 7:** *Imago*, Galerie Martal, Montreal, Quebec (Jean-Marie Delavalle, Jennifer Dickson, Betty Goodwin, Peter London, Jan Menses, Gunter Nolte, Ken Peters, Barry Wainwright and Irene Whittome).

*Printmaker Betty Goodwin uses clothing imagery as she has done before, but her shirt and waistcoat here seem to be more objective than in her previous work. There are more pretexts for playful cloth folds and wrinkles than clothes holding the invisible presences of wearers. Her Gants Noirs, however, are more personalized, and in fact hold a feeling similar to the gloves in Roy Kiyooka's Stoned Gloves photographs—shown recently at the Musée d'art contemporain. (VIII. Kirkman and Heviz, 29 September 1971)*

**Fall:** Visiting Philip Surrey's exhibition at Galerie Gilles Corbeil, Goodwin meets Marcel Lemyre, then a young artist, who becomes her studio assistant. Lemyre introduces Goodwin to his friend Roger Bellemare, who had opened Galerie B in September. Specializing in prints and multiples, his gallery represents international artists such as Christo, Dali, Johns, Lichtenstein, Miro, Picasso, Stella, Tàpies, and Warhol, as well as the Canadians General Idea, John Heward, Alfred Pellán, Roland Poulin and Jean-Paul Riopelle. Galerie B also offers Goodwin her first real introduction to the work of Joseph Beuys, which Bellemare showed on many occasions. Her first dealer, Bellemare becomes a close friend with whom Goodwin travels and discusses art.

I entered into a business relation with him that became extraordinary in terms of friendship, exchange about art, talking about art, in a sense we grew up together in the art world. . . . I could have gone in another gallery but just by chance, I went into his. That was great to have that kind of

exchange, it was really extraordinary. He was encouraging, he was an excellent critic, we had phenomenal exchanges. (III. Thériault interview, 1983)

**Goodwin receives an Arts Grant from The Canada Council, and is one of the eleven artists to win a \$500 prize from the Department of Cultural Affairs, Quebec.**

**October 13–31:** *Canada: Graphic and Photographic*, exhibition funded by The Canadian Society of Graphic Art and the Canadian Consulate General in San Francisco and shown at the Helen Euphrat Gallery, De Anza College, Cupertino, California, U.S.A. In February 1971, *Exhibition of Canadian Prints* held in Washington, D.C., showed many of the same works. Leaflet published.

**October 23–29:** *Canadian Printmakers' Showcase 1971*, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**November 10–December 5:** *Exposition des créateurs du Québec*, organized by the Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec and exhibited at the Musée du Québec, Quebec, Quebec. The exhibition also tours to Terre des Hommes, Montreal, Quebec, to the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, and to seven other venues in Quebec. Catalogue published.

**December:** Goodwin meets with Castelli Graphics in New York.

They were most enthusiastic about my work and arranged for the inclusion of my work in the Blue Parrot Gallery, which handles Dine, Rauschenberg, Johns, etc. Mr. Michael Steinberg, who heads this gallery, was as strongly impressed as Tyler, Leavin, and Castelli; he took eight of my works for immediate display, and I am to have a show at this gallery in October, 1972. (Grant report, The Canada Council, 23 December 1971)

## 1972

**July:** Chosen from a roster of three hundred candidates, Goodwin wins the Arts Council of Great Britain Major Prize for *Shirt Four* at the *Third British International Print Biennale* at the Bradford City Art Galleries and Museums, Bradford, England. The jury is composed of Edward Lucie-Smith, Jean Adhémar, Pontus Hultén and Michael Rothenstein. Catalogue published.

*It was only occasionally that extreme technical refinement and expertise seemed actually to serve as a springboard to something new. A conspicuous example was the print by one of the two major prize-winners, the Canadian artist [Betty Goodwin]. Her image of a shirt—which had apparently taken its start by making a direct image on the plate of the object itself—has a haunting human presence.* (VIII. Lucie-Smith, June 1972)

**Vest Fragment One, 1972**

Soft-ground etching on wove paper

65.6 x 49.8

Art Gallery of Ontario







10/10/2020

*These monolithic works (sculptural vests) which are part of a series—a theme and variations—were perceived at the time of their exhibition as perturbing because they were not anecdotal or narrative. Unique in both power and sensibility, they demanded to be seen for themselves. I was not the only admirer for, soon after our meeting in 1971, Betty Goodwin won the British Arts Council Prize in printmaking. Her fellow participants in the print competition included the likes of Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg and Stella. Ken Tyler, a colleague of mine who pulled prints for these artists in New York, was deeply impressed by the technical quality of Goodwin's plates, and offered to work with her. But she opted to continue going it alone. (• X. Bellemare, 1994)*

**August 28–September 9:** *Kosso Eloul, Betty Goodwin, Rita Letendre*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia.

**September–June, 1973:** *International Graphics*, organized by the Extension department of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, in co-operation with The Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers and The Canadian Society of Graphic Art, and co-ordinated by Eva Landori.

*I have known the work of Betty Goodwin for several years now. She has arrived at a graphic technique for her imagery that is innovative and successful. There is no doubt that her work is a definitive contribution to Canadian contemporary graphics. Her investigations in graphics should be permitted to continue and I sincerely trust that the Canada Council will assist her. As a graphic technician and publisher I look forward to seeing the future work of this outstanding creative artist. (II. Kenneth E. Tyler, referee, Grant application, The Canada Council, 11 October 1972)*

**October 14–November 15:** *Vest Prints*, Galerie B, Montreal, Quebec.\* Goodwin's first one-person exhibition at Galerie B in Montreal includes works from the Vest series and the Parcel series.

*Betty Goodwin, who has dedicated some of her work to Christo and to Beuys, is one of the most genuinely interesting Montreal artists that it has been my pleasure to discover in a long time. The human experience that passionately informs her work creates the mystery of a presence, or an absence, or both. Perhaps that is all we have to know. Her secrets defy words, they do not require them. (VIII. Toupin, December 1972–January 1973)*

*Betty Goodwin's show at Galerie B on Crescent St. is one of the most exciting shows so far this season. . . . The exhibit of 21 pieces is a combination of etchings, collages, graphite works and sculptures of cast cement. It's one of the very few exhibits I've seen in which the various media are all used with equal sensitivity, and in which the visual messages come through so consistently. (VIII. Bates, 21 October 1972)*

**La veste disparue**, 1972  
Embossed paper collage on  
wove paper  
85.5 x 66.8  
*Art Gallery of Ontario*



**October 24–27:** *Canadian Printmakers' Showcase 1972*, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**1 9 7 3**

**March 25–April 29:** *Davidson National Print and Drawing Competition*, Stowe Gallery and Cunningham Fine Arts Building, Davidson College, North Carolina, U.S.A. Catalogue published.

**April–May 20:** Galerie B, Montreal, Quebec (Tom Dean, Gloria Deitcher, General Idea, Betty Goodwin, John Heward, Guido Molinari, Gunter Nolte, Milly Ristvedt, Henry Saxe, Claude Tousignant and Bill Vazan).

*The real character of the show comes from Bellemare's own championing of what can be called a Montreal 'new graphics' movement. It is not necessarily new in the ultimate sense—drawing and printmaking that is built around draughtsmanship are as old and as modern as art itself. But Bellemare's choices have a common quality. It is a quiet concern with an esthetic image. This was particularly the case with Gallery B's special protégé, printmaker Betty Goodwin, who in spite of her nostalgic use of the male-vest, and even symbolic overtones, uses this motif for her very gentle and sensitive drawing and print textures.* (VIII. White, 5 May 1973)

**May:** Goodwin receives an Arts Grant and a travel allowance from The Canada Council, which she uses the following month to go to London, England, to visit workshops and buy equipment and supplies in Paris, and to attend the International Graphic Fair in Basel.

**May 16–26:** *Vest Prints*, D'Avanti, Ottawa, Ontario.\*

Goodwin begins work on the *Nest* and the *Note* series.

Using old manuscripts annotated by hand, corrected writers' copy, I made a series of prints and montages; I was interested in the words exclusively as marks upon paper, and not for their literary content. A few of the notes are even abstract. I like these messages because they have led to other recent works. (• X. Toupin, 16 November 1974)

*In 1973 Betty Goodwin made a small graphic work consisting of definitions of the verb to draw hand-stamped over two pages and presented like an open book. In retrospect, this appropriation of a standard dictionary entry offers an understanding of the way that drawing has been central to her practice and of how, for her, it is always considerably more than a technical procedure: DRAW . . . To represent by lines drawn on a plane surface; to form a picture or image; as, to draw the picture of a man; hence, to represent in fancy; as, the speaker drew a picture of poverty . . . To eviscerate; to pull*

**Untitled**

**(Possession/Desire/Love),**

1973

Etching, typewritten text and metal staples on chine collé on wove paper

56.4 x 45.1

Art Gallery of Ontario

BE ~~dragging~~ SOMETHING ~~like~~ with  
 OUT ~~Acquaint~~ & ~~Not~~ toward POSSESSION  
 OF that something FOR THIS  
 reason, DESIRE automatically  
 dies when it is fulfilled; it  
 ends with satisfaction ~~LOVE~~ ~~on the~~  
 other hand, is  
 ETERNALLY UNSATISFIED LOVE  
 is the reverse of desire  
 LOVE is the all activity  
 L IN THE  
 act of LOVE the person goes out  
 of himself

draw

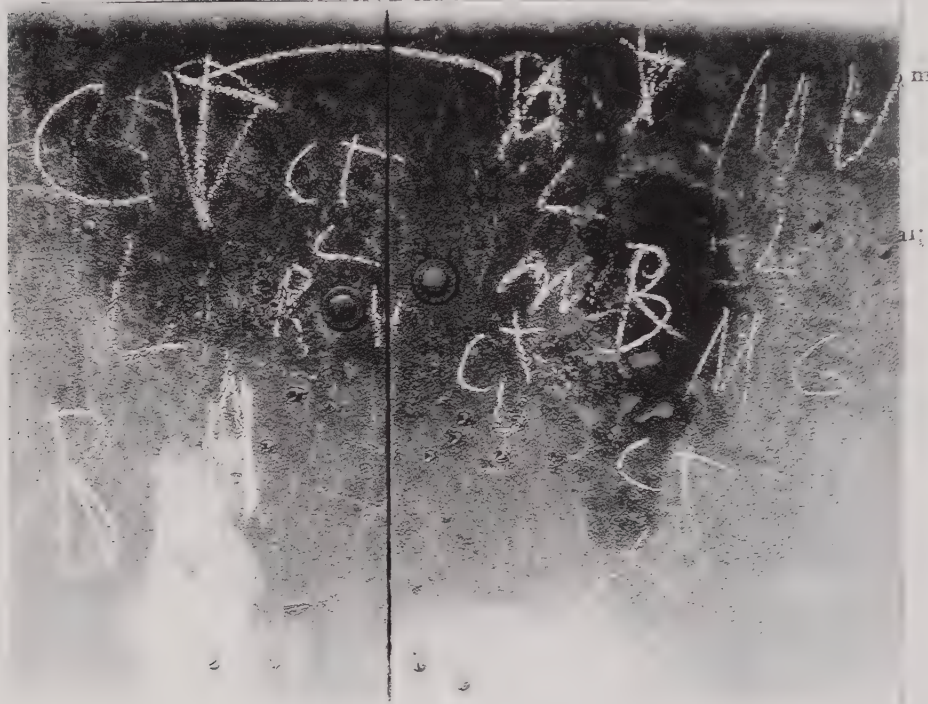
DRA W, wē; drew, pt; drawing, pr.; drawn, pp.

ME drawn, drahen; AS. dragan, to draw,

drag

1. To pull along; to haul; to cause to move forward by force applied in front of the thing moved, or at the ~~front~~ the fore end, as by a rope or chain.

compulsion





*out the bowels of; as, to draw poultry . . . To let run out; to extract; as, to draw wine from a cask; to draw blood from a vein . . . To inhale, to take into the lungs; as, there I first drew air . . .* (V. Bradley, 1995)

I like the flexibility of [drawing], the directness, and also working on paper. . . . I can cut it up. I can add. I can wash off very easily. I don't feel the same kind of freedom with canvas. (III. Harmsen interview, 1992)

**June 19–August 31:** *Banque d'œuvres d'art / Canada / Art Bank*, from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, exhibited at the Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, France. Catalogue published.

**August 14–September 3:** *Some Aspects of Printmaking*, Canadian National Exhibition, Better Living Centre, Toronto, Ontario. Leaflet published.

**September–June 1974:** *Canadian Graphics*, organized by The Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers and The Canadian Society of Graphic Art, and circulated by the Extension department of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, to several schools and libraries throughout Ontario.

**September 8–29:** *Gallery Pascal 10th Anniversary Exhibition*, Gallery Pascal, Toronto, Ontario.

**November 1–25:** *7th Burnaby Biennial Open Juried Show of Edition Art*, Burnaby Art Gallery, Burnaby, British Columbia. Catalogue published.

**November 14–January 6, 1974:** *Folio Seventy-three*, curated by Suzanne Foley, organized by the California College of Arts and Crafts World Print Competition in collaboration with the San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, U.S.A., and exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Art. Catalogue published.

## 1974

Goodwin slowly concludes the *Vest* series. Instead of etching the clothes, she now hardens them, casts them, even buries them in earth.

I made vests for three years . . . that was enough. I was truly stuck on the vests up until the day I felt the need to set out upon a different path. However, the new image had to be as strong for me as the vests. It was then that I began making dead vests. I wanted to extract the life from all of them,

**Untitled (To Draw).** 1973  
Graphite, stamped ink, porous  
pointed pen, silver gelatin  
print on wove paper  
65.8 x 50.7  
*Art Gallery of Ontario*

to leave nothing but the bones. Later I understood that these were only one vehicle and that most of the qualities and needs I found in them could be found in other things as well. So when I stopped making the vests I did not feel that it was the end of everything. (• X. Toupin, 16 November 1974)

**January 11: Goodwin attends Joseph Beuys' *Noiseless Blackboard Eraser* performance organized by Ronald Feldman Fine Arts in New York, during his first visit to America. She takes many photographs of him and includes one of them in her 1972 print *Vest for Beuys*.**

I became aware of him during the two years I was doing vests. I bought a fisherman's jacket, exactly like the one Beuys wore and I did a print of that. I also went to New York when Feldman had a show. What was impressive wasn't the show, it was Beuys' presence and his entourage. He was there giving off energy and everybody was taking photographs, including myself. So when I did the vest I put one of my photos of him on it. I had taken the vest down with me and I was going to ask him to sign it. He was very generous and they would say he signs anything. If you take a poster, he'll sign it. He'll ask for your name and he'll give you best wishes. I'm sure he would have signed my vest with great pleasure. But it just didn't seem important. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

Sometime around '67-'68, when I very belatedly began to make some connection with myself, I became aware of all that had happened in the U.S. in the sixties. What I got out of that was that any means of expression was totally valid. Beuys pushed this concept further for me; through him, I found a great source of courage. At one point I had a print of his hung in my kitchen, a full-length, life-size, very 'Humphrey Bogart' photo of himself. I was very impressed with the fact that he used whatever was required to communicate what he wanted to say, whether it be a rabbit, felt, fat, electrical equipment, or his very being. Powerful imagery. A powerful human being and a very important figure of our time. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

*When we encountered Beuys' work together, what struck Betty was the mixture of flesh, metal and felt—Beuys always wears a hat, and always wears the leg of a small animal on him. His work combines animal, vegetal and mineral, with the various energies getting mixed up together. It was a big opening for her.* (X. Roger Bellemare in Freedman, Winter 1984)

*What Goodwin shares with Beuys is the freedom to leap categories, and that elliptical use of imagery for suggesting feelings rather than explaining or depicting them. Both achieve this by possessing a visceral empathy for substances, an instinctive understanding of how raw material already connotes, even before the artist's hand has begun to shape it. They are both intensely tactile artists, savoring surface qualities and specific densities above all, in the same way that Beckett clearly delights in the sound of*

*words while being ambivalent about their usefulness as meaning, and obviously doubtful of their ability to communicate at all.* (V. Bogardi, 1986)

**April 1–20:** *Markings*, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A., curated by Chris Rhodes.

**May:** Goodwin rents a new studio from Henry Saxe and Milly Ristvedt at 3713, boulevard Saint-Laurent in Montreal.

Before I came to this studio I was just doing etchings and this studio seemed gigantic. It just seemed completely overwhelming in space and yet I felt very strongly that if I was going to put myself in these conditions, that at least I was going to allow myself to expand in whatever way I want, and I didn't necessarily mean large pieces—in my head too. . . . It's a tremendous luxury to have a lot of space around you, a space which you can move into, think about, a space which can have an effect on you. (III. Tomas interview, 1985)

**July–September:** *Fourth British International Print Biennale*, City of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums, Cartwright Hall, Bradford, England. Catalogue published.

**Summer:** Goodwin visits Corsica, Italy and Greece.

*In Florence she stood for a long time, deeply moved, before the tombstones lining the cathedral walls. In Galerie B one can see one of those charcoal drawings which are strangely reminiscent of the outlines of sepulchres; devoid of inscriptions, they retain only the schematic aspect of vision. A resourceful tourist who stays away from museums but who can go into raptures over an old wall in Liguria or Calvi, Betty Goodwin has photographed dozens of these walls. In Italy she was fascinated by the tiny household niches where gas meters sit tucked away behind metal doors. In Corsica she lingered before the glass-enclosed icons found along mountainside paths. Troubled, upon her return, by all these little signs and traces which continued to haunt her, she spent entire days in her studio doing nothing.* (• X. Toupin, 16 November 1974)

I wish now to continue with some printmaking, but will concentrate more on a series of sculptural assemblages involving pipes, tarpaulins, glass, clamps, boxes, etc. Related to this work, I would need to visit Greece and Corsica. During this past summer (1974) I undertook lengthy exploratory trips (at my own expense) throughout various parts of western Europe, and as I passed through remote parts of Greece and Corsica, I was profoundly inspired by the boxed-in offerings to the church located throughout the countryside and also by ancient, time-worn details of walls, doors, locks, etc. I would like to immerse myself in these surroundings for several weeks and make

*page 108:*

**Working Notes**, 1974

Mixed media on wove paper

34.6 x 27.1

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*page 109:*

**Untitled (Notes Toward**

**"To Draw")**, 1974

Mixed media on wove paper

34.6 x 27.2

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

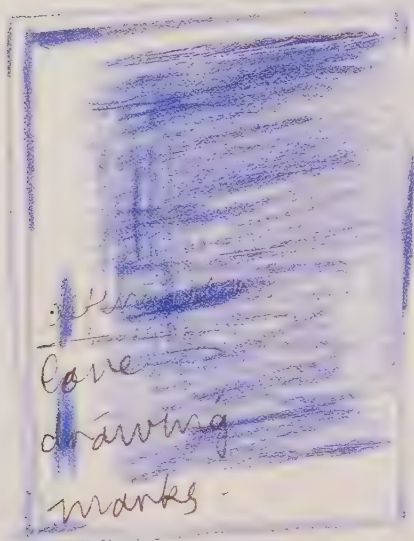


Small etchings of leaves  
Traces

traces

leavings

offerings corfu  
Easton



Cave  
drawing  
marks

join  
connections

LEAVINGS  
OFFERINGS

NOTES



lines slightly uneven  
in weight

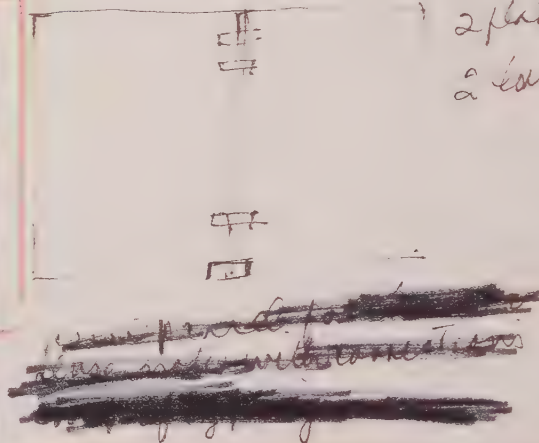
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photo with  
notes

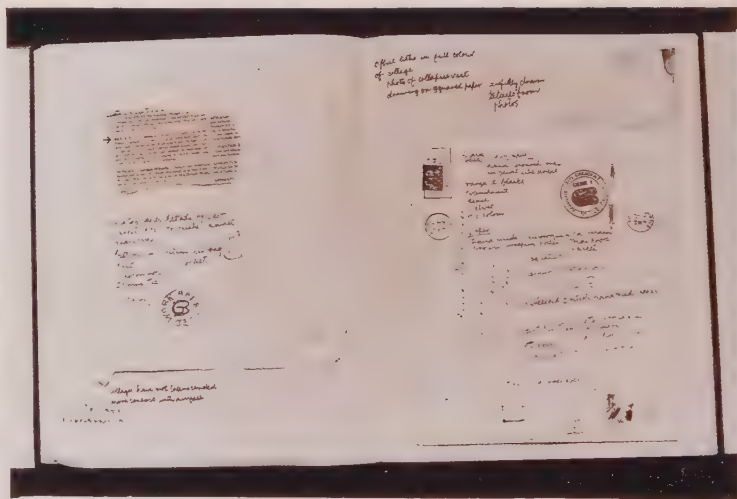
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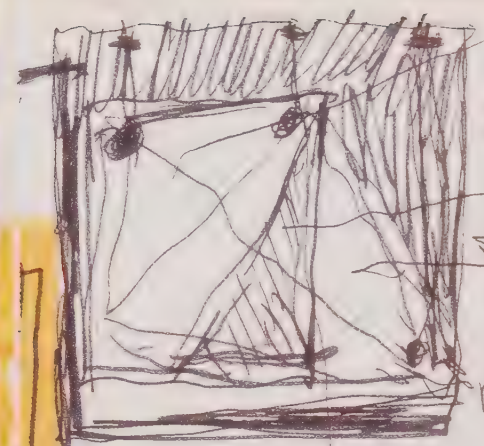
2  
2 plates + alod  
2 laminate sheets



P.9. 15  
P.31



1974  
14



tape  
DCT 26 1974  
blue

white  
run  
bleed  
drawing  
material  
pen  
pencil



electrical tape

DRAW, vt: drew, pt.: drawing. ppr.:  
DRAWN. pp. (ME. DRAHEN: AS\*in dragen.  
to draw to draw . drag  
to pull along to haul to cause  
to move ~~to~~ forward by force  
applied in front of the thing





Making of the Tarpaulin series  
in the Saint-Laurent studio,

1975

*Photo by Betty Goodwin*

sketches and photographs. These would immensely enrich my vision for pieces on which I am presently working, in a studio rented at Montreal. (II. Grant application, The Canada Council, 1 October 1974)

**Goodwin begins the Tarpaulin series.**

One of the first things I did when I got the tarpaulin into the studio was to stretch it out on the floor, nail all of the edges down, wash it, and begin to understand the way it was made. I did not have any idea how I was going to proceed. It was only once I had it stretched out and explored that I made decisions as to which chance marks I would choose to leave; the seams were also meaningful. I used gesso, oils, or pastels, at the same time folding and unfolding it, hanging it and taking it down. So the process involved folding and developing the surface. Unfolded, some of the tarps were very large so that by the time I got to my final image, the layering had become very complex. Apart from being the support, the tarpaulin also plays a formal role. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)



*One day Betty phoned me and said: 'I think I've got something. I've got out of the vests. Come to the studio tomorrow.' I went and I saw a huge tarpaulin on the wall. It was folded in such a way that there was a big opening in the middle and openings at both sides and ropes hanging down. There she was, exulting about being out of the vests. Down inside, I had a little smile. (X. Roger Bellemare in Freedman, Winter 1984)*

**September 28–October 31:** *I Bienal Internacional de Obra Grafica y Arte Seriado*, Fundacion Enrique IV de Castilla, Segovia, Spain. Catalogue published.

**November 8–December 8:** *9 Out of 10: A Survey of Contemporary Canadian Art*, organized by the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, exhibited at the Art Gallery of Hamilton and touring to Kitchener and Stratford, Ontario. Catalogue published.

**November 9–30:** *Tarpaulins and Other Pieces*, Galerie B, Montreal, Quebec.\*

*There is a tremendous humanity in all of Goodwin's work. Her works open up vast realms of sensitive and intelligent exploration of a world that has been experienced, of the world as one still experiences it. Goodwin makes us discover all that is hidden in the material, all its wealth. She understands with great insight and passion the essence of aging. (VIII. Pontbriand, March 1975)*

**November 16–December 6:** *Tarpaulins and Other Pieces*, Galerie Jolliet, Quebec, Quebec.\*

**November 16–January 12, 1975:** *The 9th International Biennial Exhibition of Prints in Tokyo*, organized by the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, and The Japan Foundation; exhibited in Japan at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, and the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto (January 21–March 2, 1975). Catalogue published.

Dear Ms. Castleman, During this past summer I was invited to show some of my prints at the International Biennial of Prints in Tokyo. The secretary-general, Mr. Masayoshi Homma, told me in his letter of invitation that you had recommended me as one of the artists to represent Canada. I am most appreciative that you thought sufficiently of my work to do so and wish to thank you most sincerely. . . . (Letter to Riva Castleman, Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 30 September 1974)

## 1975

**February:** Goodwin travels to Cuba, where she takes numerous photographs of small gas-meter doors. These, along with the Italian tombs she had seen the previous summer, inform the Tomb/Door drawings of this period.

During a visit to Florence, I had seen flat inscribed marble slabs. In some places, you could see only the pencil line in the plaster where a slab was destined. I started doing large drawings, layering the graphite to a density similar to the actual tombs and also in a way, influenced by the tarpaulin surface. It was only while working on the tarpaulins that I was able to resolve the quality I wanted in the drawings. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

In fact, if my works communicate more than what they are on the surface, this is because the constructed piece is not the work. There is something else, something more remote than the memory of objects, that I wish to attain. I mean a record of feelings and sensations. Everybody has histories of this kind, whether they know it or not. But I don't want to relate my history through words. (• X. Toupin, 16 November 1974)

**April 15–May 12:** *Le choix des galeries*, Place des Arts, Montreal, Quebec.

**June:** Goodwin receives an Arts Grant from The Canada Council.

**June 6–August 31:** *10 Biennale of Graphic Art*, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. Catalogue published.

**1 9 7 6**

**Betty and Martin Goodwin lose their only child, Paul.**

**March 9–April 3:** *Cerfs-volants*, Galerie B, Montreal, Quebec.\*

**April 1–May 9:** *Cent-onze dessins du Québec*, organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Alain Parent, and exhibited at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario (September 15–June 14, 1977). Catalogue published.

**May 31–July 4:** *17 Canadian Artists: A Protean View*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, curated by Alvin Balkind (Tom Dean, Paterson Ewen, Eric Fischl, Betty Goodwin, John Hall, John Heward, Bill Jones, Ron Martin, N. E. Thing Co. Ltd., Lyndall Osborne, Bruce Parsons, Reinhard Reitzenstein, Michael Snow, Irene Whittome, Joyce Wieland, Shirley Wiitasalo and Alex Wyse). Catalogue published.

*Betty Goodwin does not know where the ideas for her work come from. She says, 'they come over my shoulder'. Perhaps she is thus protecting her magic, knowing that to lay it open to the air may be to*



**Untitled (Bed), 1976**  
Oil stick and pastel on paper  
57.5 x 57.4  
Art Gallery of Ontario

*subject it to the threat of damage or destruction. In any case, the result of this conscious evasion injects into her work and her person a tremulous balance of highly volatile components. From this tremulousness has come a powerful art, dark, brooding, full of energy and presence. Her strongest works so far are the tarpaulin pieces, of which two are in this exhibition. (VI. Balkind, 1976)*

*Betty Goodwin's contemporary tapestries of truck tarpaulins have a darkling majesty. They represent a quantum leap from the prints of vests by which she has been known thus far. (VIII. Lowndes, 5 June 1976)*

**June 30–September 1:** *Trois générations d'art québécois: 1940–1950–1960*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**July 1–31:** *Contemporary Quebec Prints / Gravures contemporaines du Québec*, Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, Montreal, Quebec. Leaflet published.

**July 7–31:** *1972–1976 Directions Montréal*, Véhicule Art, Montreal, Quebec (Allan Bealy, Pierre Boogaerts, Charles Gagnon, Betty Goodwin, John Heward, Mijlenko Horvat, Christian Knudsen,



Suzy Lake, Claude Mongrain, Jacques Palumbo, Leopold Plotek, Roland Poulin, Henry Saxe, Hans van Hoek, Roger Vilder and Irene Whittome).

*By contrast [with the works of the other artists], those of Betty Goodwin appear to be charged with a rare violence, since they all operate via brutal quotations from the real. . . . Such close contact with the material enables Betty Goodwin to make strange drawings, whose hazy whitenesses emerge from the greys produced by the dense erasures resulting from the wear of the pencil or pastel on the surface of the paper. Folded meanwhile, and then refolded and attached to horizontal rods so that they can be hung on the wall or suspended in space, the raw canvas tarpaulins with their metal grommets become kinds of primitive wall coverings. Frayed and scarred by time, they leave webbing and ropes dangling as if in wait for some mysterious cargo. (• VIII. Moulin, 24 August 1976)*

During this next year I wish to explore and develop further my tarpaulin series, to continue intensely with drawing and to return to etching. . . . It would also help me immeasurably to visit Egypt and Israel, to immerse myself in a particular kind of scale and art history. (II. Grant application, The Canada Council, 30 September 1976)

**October: Goodwin travels to Paris and takes many photographs of tombs at the Père Lachaise cemetery.**

Excerpt from Betty Goodwin's notebook, 3 October 1976:

Giacometti "Yes, I make pictures, and have always made them, ever since I was first able to draw or paint—to attack reality, to defend myself, to nourish myself, to become stronger to better defend and better attack, to have firm ground beneath my feet, to be able to proceed in all places and in all directions, to be as free as possible, to protect myself from cold and hunger and death, to become free for the striving with these means which seem to be appropriate to better see and understand my environment so that I can be even freer to expend my energies, to give as much as possible of myself to what I am doing, to experience adventure, to discover new worlds, to carry on a struggle."

**November 11–December 12: Betty Goodwin, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.\* This exhibition, curated by Alain Parent, is Goodwin's first major solo museum show.**

*Since 1969, the impact of Betty Goodwin's engravings, etchings and intaglios, as well as that of her collages, gouaches and drawings, has continued to grow. The originality and richness of the artist's insights make hers one of the most significant contributions to emerge from the Montreal arts scene since the developments of colour-field painting in Quebec in the 1970s. . . . This exhibition, which is*

*intended to show the evolution of a consistent, fully mature and very meaningful way of thinking about art, will do so by presenting the most significant works produced over the last seven years.* (• V. Parent, 1976)

*If one show must be chosen [this year], it will have to be Betty Goodwin's semi-retrospective which is still on view at the Musée. Goodwin is a lyricist concerned with the meaning of the gesture and the improbabilities of recapturing the past. Her images are both original and deeply felt, every detail is invested with a nerviness that oscillates between affirmation and anxiety.* (VIII. Bogardi, 31 December 1976)

**December 17–January 16, 1977:** *Jewish Experience in the Art of the Twentieth Century*, The Art Gallery, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Catalogue published.

## 1977

**Winter and Spring:** Goodwin creates her first site-specific installation in an abandoned industrial building at 1591 Clark Street in Montreal. *Four Columns to Support a Room* is a 7.63 x 6.10 m indoor room made of black oil paint and sealer on thick brown paper, lit with a single 60W light bulb. Except for assistants and friends, the installation—also known as *The Clark Street Project*—is not open to the public.

This was my first move out of my studio and it was extremely difficult. I knew what I wanted to do but I did not know how I was going to manage it. In the end, I cleaned out the space and I isolated four columns to use as supports for a room. These columns had really quite beautiful markings, some partially covered in plastic, others wrapped in canvas. Vertical totem-like coffins, really, again related to the sketch pieces and to earlier tomb drawings. I enclosed these four columns in heavy brown paper painted in various blacks. So I had this enormous black cube-like mass in the space. Inside, the volume was very special with a totem-like piece in each corner lit by one weak light bulb. During the building I took a series of photographs and worked on these in oils to have some kind of document and to further clarify the other work that developed from the sketch pieces. There was, for example, the development of the bed in the series of drawings which eventually led to the river piece. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

*This dark room seems to me to have had a symbolic function: a dark space surrounding the artist to enable her to probe deeply into herself to find the basic sources of her creative imagination. The photographs of Four Columns to Support a Room clearly show the process of wrapping the space defined by the four columns. In the same way, the vests had been wrapped around bodies, and the tarpaulins had wrapped the backs of trucks.* (VI. Théberge, 1983)

**January 7–February 4:** *The Second Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition*, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia, curated by Irene Whittome (Charles Gagnon, Yves Gaucher, Betty Goodwin, Roland Poulin, Marthe Wery and Irene Whittome). Catalogue published.

*The immense narrative drawing by Betty Goodwin [Pacing for Sam] is a surprise in relation to the work that has gained her a reputation as an emerging artist of interest. . . . The exhibited graphite work employs rubbings of horizontal boards on which, at specific intervals, are placed additional rubbings of numbers that measure movement through time and space. These descriptive textures and shapes are arranged in relation to a darkly humorous text by the great Irish writer Samuel Beckett, that was handwritten beneath the graphic elements.* (VIII. Shuebrook, 27 January 1977)

**After the Tarpaulin works, Goodwin begins the Kite series and the felt coffin pieces.**

I continued with my Tarpaulin Series and then in further exploring and developing this series (with tarpaulin, wood, cardboard, paper and metal), my work became more three-dimensional; I began to deal with container-like forms. Then I rented one floor of an abandoned factory, chosen with particular concern for the space and location, in order to make an installation dealing with this container-concept. This also involved many drawings and photographs. The year was an intense period leading me to the production of several major pieces. (Grant report for The Canada Council, 27 October 1978)

**Goodwin travels to Italy and visits Bologna and Padua.**

One can be influenced by a lot of things, a patch of color on a wall, a butcher shop. . . . Two years ago, I went back to visit the Scrovegni chapel in Padua. Although I have seen these Giotto's many times, it means something different every time. Every day, I can be influenced by a whole series of things that can change a little the next day. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

**March–December:** *50 Canadian Drawings / 50 Dessins canadiens*, travelling exhibition organized by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick, and curated by Paul A. Hachey. The exhibition travels to schools and galleries throughout New Brunswick and to The Art Gallery, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia (October 28–November 20). Leaflet published.

**April:** Goodwin receives an Arts Grant from The Canada Council.

**April 29–May 22:** *Works on Paper*, from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, exhibited at the Harbourfront Art Gallery, Toronto, Ontario. Catalogue published.



**June 1–6:** *Arte Fiera 77: Bologna International Fair of Contemporary Art*, Bologna, Italy.

**June 3–July 3:** *Montréal maintenant*, London Art Gallery, London, Ontario, curated by Kate McCabe (Edmund Alleyn, Pierre Boogaerts, Eva Brandl, Betty Goodwin, Trevor Goring, John Heward, Miljenko Horvat, Suzy Lake, Claude Mongrain, Roland Poulin, Chris Richmond and Bill Vazan). Catalogue published.

**September–August, 1980:** *Nouvelle figuration en gravure québécoise*, travelling exhibition organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, and curated by Josée Bélisle. The show tours to schools, libraries and exhibition centres throughout Quebec. Catalogue published.

**September 22–October 23:** *Tendances actuelles*, Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, France, curated by Gilles Toupin, Georges Bogardi and Normand Thériault (David Bolduc, Jean-Serge Champagne, David Craven, Raymond Gervais, Betty Goodwin, Roland Poulin, Leslie Reid and Irene Whittome). Catalogue published.

*Montrealer Betty Goodwin, the only member of this group over the age of 35, is haunted by the survival of the object. She denounces forgetfulness by working on, among other things, old vests and worn and patched truck tarpaulins which she takes and folds. Her interrogation of the object appears to be motivated by a quest for the identity that human beings confer on the objects they use. (• VIII. Moreau, 12 November 1977)*

**September:** While in Europe for the exhibition of her work at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, Goodwin travels to Rome, Milan, Frankfurt and London.

While I am abroad, I will study early masterworks in France, England, Germany and Italy. . . . I feel the need at this point to immerse myself in art history. I had planned a more intensive trip to Egypt and Israel, but the pressure of various commitments makes it difficult for me [to] expend the time and effort that this would require. (Letter to The Canada Council, 21 July 1977)

**September 25–October 16:** *Drawings by a Score of Montreal Artists / Dessins d'une vingtaine d'artistes de Montréal*, Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec.

I plan now to rent a seven-room flat (not as a dwelling), as an integral part of my work, where each room—i.e. painterly walls, ceiling and floor—interacts with wood, clay and metal furniture-like pieces. For example, in one of the double-rooms there will be a narrow, elongated, bed-like metal and clay piece, going from one end of the double-room to the other; the walls, ceiling and floor will

be treated so as to create an entity with the bed-like object, so that in effect the material for the sculpture is the room, metal, clay, and paint. Proceeding throughout the flat in this way, five or six large sculptural pieces will be completed as a series. So much will be brought together from my earlier work in this major project, that I feel it of utmost importance to carry it to completion. (II. Grant application, The Canada Council, 27 October 1977)

**November 5–December 11:** *Transparent Things / Transparences*, from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, and travelling to London, Ontario; Calgary, Alberta; Victoria, British Columbia; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

## 1978

**April:** Betty Goodwin receives her first Senior Arts Grant from The Canada Council.

**May 8–June 5:** *Polaroids*, Galerie Optica, Montreal, Quebec.

**May–June:** Goodwin travels to Romania and Turkey. In Istanbul, she takes numerous photographs of cemeteries.

I never took photographs with the intention of working from them. It's just something that intrigued me, so I took tons of photographs. But they're like an electrical connection, an electrical current. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

**August 8–September 4:** Goodwin creates a monumental steel bed for *Artpark 1978* in Lewiston, New York. Placed on a cliff-top lookout above the Niagara River, *River Piece* is Goodwin's only outdoor sculpture. Catalogue published.

This piece was informed and shaped at least as much by the gorge and river, erosion, build-up and tensions of the site as by the sketches and 'ideas' I had arrived with. While possessing its own identity, it also participates in the process through which the gorge continues to break, shift, change and evolve. (VI. Tyson, 1979)

*At Artpark this year Canadian artist Betty Goodwin created one of the most stimulating works of the season. This sculpture, which stood out sharply from the other rather disappointing works, can be*



**Untitled, (River Bed Series), 1977**

(detail)

Graphite and coloured pencil  
on wove paper

50.3 x 65.2

Art Gallery of Ontario

*read on a number of different levels. First of all, its forward section bore a distinct resemblance to the head and legs of a bed. This reference to a bed very soon became hazy as one walked around the sculpture and found oneself face to face with interlocking pieces of metal that conveyed an impression of almost total formality. One couldn't help but think of a river bed, particularly since the variations in the height of the sculpture, like those found in nature, reinforced the allusion. (• VIII. Morin, Fall 1978)*

*A suite of remarkable drawings, mostly in black and white, follows from this sculpture. The different levels of the riverbed are shown as in a cascade and constitute a rich study of movement, as well as a comment on perspective and volumes in a neutral space. These are perhaps Goodwin's most abstract works. (V. Yolande Racine, 1987)*

*Other drawings followed, in which the pyramidal shape which the artist called 'passage' appeared. This 'passage' became the principal image of the series, used as a kind of signal constantly reappearing on the paper's surface. (VI. Théberge, 1983)*

*The Mechanised Image*, travelling exhibition funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain, curated by Pat Gilmour and circulated throughout England. Catalogue published.



## 1979

I don't think that works of art can be totally devoid of personal references. As Jasper Johns says: 'Art springs from life experience, but you don't have to be self-expressive', and you must remember that Johns denied personal content for years. For me, it is a balance in which the autobiographical and the sub-conscious link-up with the intellect to make something new. The amount of personal data an artist allows into his work will in the end determine how it is dealt with. Even a 'pure minimalist' is revealing something personal in his choice of means. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

**April 22–June 10: Goodwin presents *An Altered Point of View* in Room 205 at P.S.1 (Project Studios One), Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island, New York, U.S.A.\***

*Here Betty Goodwin chose a classroom that had been largely untouched by changes made to the building since it had been reopened, and made into artists' studios. She decided to leave its faded and peeling*

## River Piece, 1978

Installation view at Artpark,  
Lewiston, N.Y., 1978

*Photo by Betty Goodwin*



*pink walls, its windows, its old cupboard, its dull-slate blackboards, and its worn floor as she had found them. Instead of transforming the interior of the room, she sealed the doorway so that only the frame remained visible. In the hallway outside, she then built a corridor with a ladder at its end. This ladder led up to a window, about three metres above ground level, through which one could look into the sealed room. Essentially this structure modified the viewpoint of the spectator, forcing one to make the effort to see the room, which itself became the work of art. Inside, the artist did nothing more than retrieve and replace the original blinds for the windows, in order to filter the light and restrict the field of vision to the room itself. The corridor structure served to guide the viewer to the room, and to position him so his viewpoint would be the same as the artist's—a viewpoint prescribed by virtue of its prior existence. At the same time, the corridor served to isolate the room, or almost to frame it. (VI. Chantal Pontbriand in Bradley, 1980)*

**June:** Roger Bellemare closes Galerie B.

**June–August:** Works from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, exhibited at the Adelphi University, Long Island, New York, U.S.A.

**August 17–September 9:** *Fabric Amongst Other Things*, from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, exhibited at the Harbourfront Art Gallery, Toronto, Ontario. Leaflet published.

**November 9–December 22:** Goodwin opens *The Mentana Street Project* to the public.\* During the previous two years, Goodwin, with the assistance of Marcel Lemyre, altered the interior of a ninety-year-old apartment (4005 de Mentana Street) owned by Roger Bellemare. The installation is dismantled in March 1980.

*Two years ago, mulling over possible locations for the sculpture environment she wanted to build, Montreal artist Betty Goodwin found herself rejecting the obvious choices. Loft spaces were too big and too cold. Museums weren't intimate enough. And in any case, neither a museum nor a private gallery could possibly allow her the large chunk of time she wanted to put into the work. Doing it outdoors didn't fit either. It was an interior piece she had in mind. . . . Goodwin and Lemyre scouted around and finally decided on a ground floor flat in an older row house at 4005 Mentana St., two blocks east of Parc Lafontaine. (VIII. Nixon, 1 December 1979)*

I must admit that I am at the most intense period on Mentana, and I find it very difficult to talk about something which is in the process of being done or of qualities that I am not as yet really aware of. To verbalize on the project now would seem to me to dissipate it. What I am trying to do is to expand what is already there and to create some new structures related to the rooms and

dealing with the light and scale. I find in the installations the combining of the force of the space and my particular emotional intellectual state of awareness. . . . The light is quite extraordinary and so I might record it on a graph as a kind of pulse. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

*Miss Goodwin has taken the existing elements of her rooms and pushed them to their limits. Her theme is continuity: deciding what to leave was as important as deciding what to change. Her work is not concerned with rupture, but rather with evolution. One space leads to another just like one mood or state of consciousness leads to the next. The passage from the back of the house to the front resembles the passage through life's mysterious corridors, each lit by a different light, all connected in surprising ways and all reflecting unconscious drives and conscious design.* (VIII. Freedman, 12 January 1980)

*The space was reconstructed through a doubling of corridors and rooms, so that the visitor's entire body was engaged in repeating and traversing the phantom movements of former residents. Goodwin laboriously traced the walls with graphite, bringing to life every mark and unevenness in the plaster. While accentuating a melancholy atmosphere of abandonment, she also reinvented the space by cutting through the walls, revealing inner chambers, and directing the visitor through a narrow clay-lined corridor, like a subterranean tunnel, which opened upon the front parlour, in which she created another luminescent room. The space thus conveyed a paradoxical state of entombment and shelter.* (V. Bradley, 1995)

A lot of people walked in and got the feeling of the space I had created; other people walked in and asked 'where's the work?' And almost in a hostile way you know. . . . So I would talk about what I felt I had done and in the talking, in the dialogue, they had an opportunity to decide whether they were interested or not, but at least they had some information about it. (III. Tomas interview, 1985)

## 1980

**April 24–June 15:** *L'Estampe au Québec 1970–1980*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.

*In the work of Betty Goodwin and Serge Tousignant, the print eschews the strictly technical features of the medium and plunges doggedly into the very heart of the most current issues of contemporary art.* (• VIII. Viau, 3 May 1980)

**June 10:** *Tombeau de René Crevel*, book realized in collaboration with Paul-Marie Lapointe, published by L'Obsidienne and launched at Galerie La Murée, Montreal, Quebec.

Guido Molinari had seen some collages of mine in which I was using the Mentana floor plan. He thought they might work very well with some poems that Paul-Marie had written. Paul-Marie came over to see my work and there was a good exchange. The poems he has written are called 'Le tombeau de René Crevel'. There is an analogy of imagery between the poems and the floor plan, between the typographical layout and the prints. I want to make prints of the rooms separately and as a whole. It's a most exciting project. (X. Morin, Spring 1979)

**July 5–September 7: Goodwin presents the installation *Passage in a Red Field* in the exhibition *Pluralities / 1980 / Pluralités* at the National Gallery of Canada. The work brings issues developed through her previous installations in domestic and working spaces to an institutional art space.** The exhibition is organized by Jessica Bradley and curated by Philip Fry, Willard Holmes, Allan MacKay and Chantal Pontbriand (Mowry Baden, Iain Baxter, Pierre Boogaerts, Roland Brener, Stephen Cruise, Max Dean, Joe Fafard, General Idea, Betty Goodwin, Garry Neill Kennedy, John McEwen, Claude Mongrain, Roland Poulin, Don Proch, Rober Racine, David Thauberger, Jeff Wall, Mia Westerlund and Alex Wyse). Catalogue published.

*By removing a utility door which led to exterior windows hidden behind the wall partitions, Betty Goodwin's *Passage in a Red Field* brought in more forgotten daylight, which filtered through a new 'wall' of white scrim to illuminate a narrow, white painted corridor with an angled mirror at its far end. The corridor was one of three 'passages' in Goodwin's quasi-architectural installation which was itself situated along the 'passage' to the Gallery's south wing. Angled walls treated with red pigment drew the viewer into the space. A freestanding, graphite-colored wooden corridor in its centre was lined with aromatic wax; in a very narrow, angled, steel extension of this passage a thin length of blue-white neon tubing hovered inches above an iridescent magenta powder on the floor, emanating an aura of exotic danger. The many interactions of light, color and texture from the multiple points of view which it offered gave this work a rich variety. From every perspective another composition of line, field, tone and shading presented itself. It would be facile merely to say that Goodwin was working from a larger store of experience, but as the eldest of *Pluralities* artists she responded to the exhibition opportunity with a work of notable maturity, beyond categorization and quite without need of it. (VIII. Handforth, December 1980–January 1981)*

*What Betty Goodwin was proposing in *Passage in a Red Field* was precisely a series of passages from one psychological state to the other, from one colour to the other, from one surface to the other, from one light to the other. Through a series of very intense confrontations within a relatively limited area, the visitor found himself constantly re-examining the meaning of his experience. The ambiguity of the meanings of an area thus transformed by an artist and re-built according to their specifications was analogous to the ambiguity of a dream. The elements which were built, painted and assembled had as many literal meanings as symbolic functions to the artist. (VI. Théberge, 1983)*



*Perhaps the best, most complex and most rewarding work in the show, was an installation—Betty Goodwin's Passage in a Red Field, 1980. . . . Goodwin's sensitivity to light and to the surfaces of her materials . . . made moving within the piece feel akin to what it must be like to be inside a painting. Passage in a Red Field offered what most of the art in Pluralities could not: a complex, multileveled experience that was physical, emotional, formal and intellectual all at once.* (VIII. Tousley, December 1980)

*Attitudes*, Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, France, and Canadian Cultural Centre, Brussels, Belgium (1982). Catalogue published.

*Ah! Les beaux livres, made in Québec*, Musée du Séminaire de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Quebec. Catalogue published.

## 1981

**January 17–February 7:** Galerie France Morin, Montreal, Quebec (Betty Goodwin, Jene Highstein, Lynne Lapointe, Marcel Lemyre and Keith Sonnier).

**May 9–June 11:** *Dessins*, Galerie France Morin, Montreal, Quebec.\* Goodwin mounts her first solo exhibition at the newly opened Galerie France Morin in Montreal. Morin shows the work of Joseph Kosuth, Filippo de Sambuy, Hans Haacke, Jannis Kounellis, Mimmo Paladino, Enzo Cucchi, Francesco Clemente and the Canadians John Massey, Landon Mackenzie and others. The exhibition features drawings from Goodwin's Passage series.

*The 16 black-and-white chalk drawings exhibited at the Galerie France Morin are built up of powdered dots and points creating a texture of broken lines that slowly conglomerate into forms and volumes. It is this quiet buildup, this constant hesitation between pure pigment and line, the stroke and the plane, the surface and the volume, that constitutes the inexhaustible quality of these drawings. An added gesture is visible as well in the way the support is treated. Sheets of paper are added one on top of the other, combining both to re-establish the equilibrium of the image, as well as to allow it to develop more freely in space.* (VIII. Lacroix, July–August 1981)

**October:** Goodwin receives a Senior Fellowship from The Canada Council.

## 1982

**January 14–February 7:** Works from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, exhibited at the I.G.A. Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.

September 25–October 16: *Œuvres sur papier 1963–1982*, Galerie France Morin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

December 1–23: *Photographies d'artistes*, Galerie France Morin, Montreal, Quebec.

*The tombstones that Betty Goodwin photographed in Sicily also respond to this artist's penchant for sites and places steeped in individual stories and human traces.* (• VIII. Toupin, 4 December 1982)

December 5–January 30, 1983: Pierre Théberge, Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, presents Betty Goodwin, with fellow artists Max Dean and John Massey, in the exhibition *OKanada* at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Goodwin's mixed-media installation, *In Berlin, a Triptych: The Beginning of the Fourth Part*, constitutes a turning-point in her work, marking at once the conclusion of the *Passage* series and the beginning of the *Swimmer* drawings. Catalogue published.

During the past two years I have been working on a triptych, a structure entitled 'The Beginning of the Fourth Part', to be shown in Berlin at the Akademie der Künste. . . . 'Passage' has been a dominant theme of my work for some time. In this last piece it was developed further, leading me now to new ideas I would like to try. I want to elaborate on the passage for words and bridge-river passage, and to make use of film, sound, and light, (and other elements I am more familiar with), as part of a concrete/ephemeral gestalt. This next year would be a time of many trials and a time of learning techniques. . . . At a certain point in progress, I would like to visit locations in Egypt that would enrich my thinking: Deyr-el-Bahry, temple of Hasepsone, valley-temple of Chephren, El Gizeh, and Saqqara. (II. Grant application, The Canada Council, 14 October 1982)

*The curator of this section, Mr. Pierre Théberge. . . made the bold decision to present only three works commissioned especially for the occasion from Max Dean of Ottawa, Betty Goodwin of Montreal and John Massey of Toronto. This approach (which some German newspapers deemed too restrictive) could have produced extraordinary results. However, this was not the case. Neither of the three works, each of which had a room to itself, sparked any enthusiasm. . . . Betty Goodwin's was an imposing installation: an assemblage of thin, table-like objects, a sort of narrow tunnel and a curious megaphone. On one of the walls half-visible bodies floated in space. An interesting idea, but not enough to take your breath away.* (• VIII. Morisset, 3 February 1983)

The megaphone is symbolically very straightforward: it's a call. You can use it to amplify your voice, to call for help. I use it in a way that I would hope suggests messages of need, help, or messages to be careful, to beware in this dangerous world of the threats which are continually surrounding us. (V. Morin, 1989)



Jewish Cemetery, Prague, 1982

*Photo by Betty Goodwin*

While in Germany for *OKanada*, Goodwin visits the *Zeitgeist* exhibition at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin, where she is disappointed by Beuys' *Stag Monuments 1948-1982* installation. She then travels to Prague and Cairo.

[Beuys' work] was a gigantic piece but it was also almost as if he was devouring himself, and giving out without pushing further in any sense. In other words, earlier when I first encountered him . . . it was a kind of a revelation, but it's not anymore. . . . I'm not sure that it is moving any further. But then, that's fine. He gave out such a force at one point, I don't think that force can glow forever. (III. Thériault interview, 1983)

### 1983

I am constantly keeping notes. I feel like everything is a continuation of my studio as I walk down the street or visit exhibitions or read. All of this flows into my notebook in one form or another. (V. Morin, 1989)



**March:** Goodwin travels to Vancouver.

**April:** Goodwin receives a Senior Arts Grant from The Canada Council.

**May 20–June 5:** *Art et bâtiment*, Galerie de l'UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.

**May 24–June 29:** *Drawing—A Canadian Survey 1977–1982 / Dessin contemporain canadien 1977–1982*, organized by the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec, and curated by Peter Krausz. Catalogue published.

**May 25–June 18:** Goodwin presents the first of her Swimmer drawings in *Dessins récents de la série "Nageurs"* at Galerie France Morin, Montreal, Quebec.\* For this series, Goodwin uses new materials, proposes new drawing and hanging techniques and reintroduces the human figure into her work. These significant changes are immediately celebrated by critics.

The first one was just a little head out of the water on a small piece of paper. The series came slowly. It has to do with the fact that water certainly is a giver of life, but it's also a taker of life. In many of the Swimmers there's a struggle between moving out or being pulled down. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

[An] experience of drowning was reawaked by the reading of Carolyn Forché's poems about loss and dismemberment in *The Country Between Us*. And then . . . at one point, I took many photographs, while I was on a holiday, of swimmers. I was clicking the camera over and over again. I came up with images that were a good point of departure for the body being fragmented. Water is all-giving but treacherous. I like that dichotomy, it seemed connected with a whole lot of other experiences in my head. (X. Freedman, Winter 1984)

I see swimmers in a condition under water where, out of necessity, one has to seek air and try to breathe. They are in a state in which they would probably choke if they didn't find air. In other words, they are seeking a place to breathe, rising, trying to move out. (V. Morin, 1989)

**June 23–September 4:** *The Berlin Project / Le Projet de Berlin*, the Canadian showing of Pierre Théberge's *OKanada* exhibition, is presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Catalogue published.

*According to all reports and the photographic record, the environments in which the works were placed [in Berlin] could hardly have been worse. In photos, Betty Goodwin's In Berlin, a Triptych: The Beginning*

of the Fourth Part—a juxtaposition of painted bridge-like forms, drawings and a long corridor shrouded with painted paper—looks like a little Tinker-Toy confection set down in a sterile, white gallery the size of a 747 hangar. . . . In the more intimate surroundings of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Betty Goodwin's piece also gains in strength, and assumes authority largely absent, it would appear, in Berlin. Mrs. Goodwin has made changes since Germany, creating a fine, large new drawing of a human figure, and rearranging the architectural components of the work (the solemn paper-draped corridor, the tables and bridges and the funny box-like curiosity) so that the overall composition is more condensed. The result is an exceptionally handsome poem of textures and absences, weights and flights, flat tin planes and gorgeously painted skins of paper, combining into an anthology of ceremonial passageways for the eye. (VIII. Mays, 9 July 1983)

**September 24–October 15: Betty Goodwin: Recent Drawings, at the 49th Parallel, Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, New York, is Goodwin's first one-person exhibition in New York. The exhibition includes six large Swimmer drawings and a number of smaller related works. Leaflet published. \***

There I was, isolated in this tough city, so the feedback I got made me very buoyant. I came cold. I made a little space for myself in New York. You don't feel so closed in, somehow, something expands. Other people whose work you admire come and see your work; it's not like holding up slides. You have some sort of reality: the reality of it is the most important thing. (X. Freedman, Winter 1984)

*Goodwin's works have been spoken of as grand sites of privileged subjectivity. This understanding is the effect of something intriguing: the sense of her work as perpetually improvisational, lyrically changing, depending upon placement of the paper sections and the fluidity of touch. This recovers something that was once thought of as essential in drawing: not so much the sense of subjective record, but of the difficulty never quite lost in Goodwin's finished (more like abandoned) work. . . . Goodwin makes both subjectivity of image and objectivity of material excruciating, freshly difficult. She creates an eloquent ambiguity of relationship between material means and artistic vision. This, I take it, is one of the things drawing, as an independent enterprise, is about: it is a 'borderline' art, making us as conscious of the 'emptiness' of material as the cunning needed to 'realize' an image. In Goodwin's work, the difficulty of the interaction of material and image stands revealed as the inherent goal of drawing, beyond the vicissitudes of either material or image. (VIII. Kuspit, January 1984)*

*Exceptionally powerful in both conception and execution, [the Swimmers] are, indeed, among the only works to have thus far emerged from Canada that not only reflect but also represent a significant contribution to the revival of an emotionally charged figurative art that has emanated from Europe and the United States. (V. Robert Storr in Yolande Racine, 1987)*







1984

I feel there's going to be a shift with the swimmers. . . . I would very much like to continue with what I'm doing but it's got to a point where it's moving on its own into another area. I feel there are pieces emerging from the drawings that are becoming concrete. I'm at the edge of where I'm changing over now and learning from the drawings of the last two years, and projecting them with objects. I feel as though I'm moving into something deeper. . . . I had those pieces of metal around for years. . . . Suddenly all that debris began to get used. It was magnetic. So that's where I'm heading—into objects, electricity, all of that. There are certain materials I want to use and castings I want to do. I don't know how it's going to move. I keep it simmering. (X. Freedman, Winter 1984)

**April 9-20:** Francis Colburn Gallery, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, U.S.A.\*

**May:** Goodwin receives the National Award in Visual Arts from The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, which includes the Donald Cameron gold medal, a \$5000 cash prize and a residency at The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts for the month of August. The jury, composed of Paul Fleck, Nancy Tousley, Geoffrey James and Charles Gagnon, acknowledges her substantial and continuing contribution to the arts in Canada.

*above:*

**Figure**, 1985-1986

Oil pastel and charcoal, with  
scraped lines, over Photostat  
on paper

106 x 222.9

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

*facing page:*

**Untitled (Two**

**Figures/Divers)**, 1984

Oil and coloured chalk on  
wove paper

58.5 x 43

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

**May 11–August 26:** *Reflections: Contemporary Art Since 1964 at the National Gallery of Canada*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, curated by Diana Nemiroff. Leaflet published.

**May 12–June 2:** *Face à Face: Self-portraits*, Powerhouse Gallery, Montreal, Quebec.

**October:** Goodwin receives a travel grant from The Canada Council to develop possible European venues of *Betty Goodwin: Works from 1971–1987*, an exhibition being organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. She meets with Jean-Louis Froment of the CAPC in Bordeaux; Declan McGonagle of the ICA Gallery in London; and Jean-Christophe Ammann of the Kunsthalle in Basel. She visits many museums and meets fellow artists in Cologne and Amsterdam.

**October 4–November 3:** *Graphex 9: 9th Biennial Juried and Invitational Exhibition of Canadian Prints and Drawings*, organized and exhibited by the Art Gallery of Brant, Brantford, Ontario, and circulated in galleries throughout Canada (January 1985–December 1986). Catalogue published.

## 1985

Goodwin receives an Arts Grant from the Ministère des affaires culturelles of the Quebec government.

**January 27–April 21:** *Les vingt ans du Musée à travers sa collection*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**March 7–April 2:** *10 Aspects: Recent Concerns in Canadian Drawing / Dessins canadiens récents*, organized by the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec, for the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs, Canada, and curated by Peter Krausz. The exhibition tours to Ixelles, Belgium; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Paris, France; and venues in Spain, Turkey, Israel, Algeria, Morocco and Portugal. Catalogue published.

**May–June:** Hanging of drawings by international artists, organized by Sheila Segal and Elaine Steinberg, 400 Dowd Street, Montreal, Quebec (Peter Bömmels, James Brown, Enzo Cucchi, Eric Fischl, Betty Goodwin, Mimmo Paladino and others).

**June 15–August 11:** *The Allegorical Image in Recent Canadian Painting*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, curated by Bruce Grenville (John Clark, Pierre Dorion, Paterson Ewen, Eric Fischl, Oliver Girling, Betty Goodwin, Will Gorlitz, Renée Van Halm, Lynn Hughes, Andy Patton, Joanne Tod and Shirley Wiitasalo). Catalogue published.

June 15–September 30: Goodwin presents the installation *Moving Towards Fire* in *Aurora Borealis*, a group exhibition curated by René Blouin, Normand Thériault and Claude Gosselin for *Les cent jours d'art contemporain*, Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec (Robert Adrian, Jocelyne Allouche, Geneviève Cadieux, Ian Carr-Harris, Melvin Charney, Robin Collyer, Tom Dean, Pierre Dorion, Andrew Dutkewych, Gathie Falk, Michael Fernandes, Vera Frenkel, General Idea, Raymond Gervais, Betty Goodwin, Pierre Granche, Noel Harding, Liz Magor, John Massey, John McEwen, Al McWilliams, Claude Mongrain, Rober Racine, Henry Saxe, Michael Snow, David Tomas, Renée Van Halm, Jeff Wall, Irene Whittome and Krzysztof Wodiczko). Catalogue published.

*Betty Goodwin's Moving Towards Fire was also interesting. Her room had a huge thick silver-insulation-covered pipe running across and down, as though we were in a boiler room next to the furnace. She put some weird paintings on the wall, of large (female) bodies pursuing smaller bodies, spitting or breathing fire, and she painted the joint of the thick pipe a bright red. Again, I had no idea as to her 'message' in this installation: there was menace and excitement, and it could never have been done anywhere else except in this furnace anteroom. (VIII. Kay, September 1985)*

*Betty Goodwin's piece almost has the appearance of a modern-day grotto whose walls bear the traces of anguished characters spitting out something despicable. At the meeting point of two large pipes there is a large red ball like an abscess. (• VIII. Lepage, 15 June 1985)*

July 13–31: Goodwin participates in a cultural exchange organized by the Department of External Affairs and The Canada Council, Ottawa, and the Fédération Chinoise des Hommes de Lettres et des Artistes. She travels to China with fellow artists Alex Janvier and Chris Reed, and writers Jacques Godbout, Sylvia Fraser and André Ricard.

Chinese civilization offers a wealth of history and culture until recently inaccessible to the western world. To establish contact with Chinese artists represents a rare opportunity. In my work ancient cultures have frequently been a direct source of nourishment. I have, for instance, spent periods of time in Egypt, in Greece, and in southern Italy; these direct experiences have considerably enriched my life and my work. For example, my recent 'Triptych' [*In Berlin, a Triptych: The Beginning of the Fourth Part*] bears a clear relationship to passages in the pyramids. Of course these site experiences do not necessarily make themselves felt in a literary manner in the body of my work, but they vitally affect my work. I have been working on various site projects for a great number of years. The resolution of all these works is profoundly rooted in personal experience of other cultures. Therefore I find overwhelming the prospect of visiting China in such privileged conditions. At this time in my life and in my work, I feel that such an experience would have profound repercussions. (Letter to Christina Périard, The Canada Council, 1984)



October 19–November 9: Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\* This is Goodwin's first solo exhibition in Toronto in fifteen years, and includes the large figure drawings *Black Words, Do You Know How Long It Takes for Any One Voice To Reach Another* and *Red Sea*.

*The smallest drawing could make you cry. . . . They're the most real things I've seen in a long time. They're about the human condition without the pimple art zeitgeist. She knows, she feels, and she doesn't have to read Artforum to do it. She is the pain that's in those things, and she somehow makes her angst come out in an honest way. She's giving you the most private thoughts, but you've got to come to it, it's there if you look. Furthermore, she has a repertoire of lines, especially that whiplash line, that's amazing, and her lines never go to jello. She keeps line and colour separate. (VIII. Jared Sable in Freedman, Winter 1984)*

*Betty Goodwin's works on paper at the Sable-Castelli Gallery . . . is one of the most terrific drawing shows Toronto has had the chance to see in many a long day. . . . Nothing about these pictures is premeditated or contrived, and mere mental effort has played little part in their making. The finished works appear to have occupied the artist's body, gathered strength from it and come kicking out of it, like a baby. . . . The imagery of floating men speak poignantly to us of our ironic human lot—the upstream swim against approaching death, and the unknowability of life. But the pictures themselves speak of one woman's determination to keep resisting, by creating a rich, rather old-fashioned artistic beauty that's as raw as the Stone Age, and as risky as tomorrow. (VIII. Mays, 31 October 1985)*

December 7: Clare Roodish dies, "deeply loved and adored by daughter Betty Goodwin and son-in-law Martin Goodwin. Keenly engaged in life to her last moment . . . "

My mother showed a lot of promise. If she had studied sculpture, I believe she would have been tremendous. She was in her sixties when she first began practising this art form. She had done weaving as well as various interesting crafts. When I was young, my mother was too busy with daily matters to pursue art. (• IV. Biron, 1988)

December 10–January 11, 1986: *Republic: The Constant Vertical*, Mercer Union, Toronto, Ontario, curated by Donna Mahalko (Peter Bowyer, Betty Goodwin, Donna Mahalko, Edward Pien, Cynthia Short and Johannes Zits).

Goodwin travels to Martinique.



Clare Roodish  
Untitled and undated textile  
hanging  
*Photo courtesy Betty Goodwin*

*During a stay in Martinique, Goodwin made numerous drawings of animals, paying particular attention to some of their positions and gestures as well as the configuration of their necks and hind legs. (V. Yolande Racine, 1987)*

*Traces: Contemporary Canadian Drawings / Dessins canadiens contemporains*, funded by the Cultural Affairs Division (Arts Promotion) of the Department of External Affairs, Canada and curated by René Blouin (Geneviève Cadieux, Melvin Charney, Michael Fernandes, General Idea, Betty Goodwin, Noel Harding, John McEwen, Al McWilliams, Claude Mongrain, Rober Racine, Henry Saxe, Michael Snow, Renée Van Halm, Irene Whittome and Krzysztof Wodiczko); exhibited at the Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, and at The International Monetary Fund Visitors' Centre, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. Catalogue published.

**1986**

**January 16–February 9:** *Du côté de chez Proust*, Galerie 13, Montreal, Quebec.

**February 5–March 15:** *Betty Goodwin: Passages*, Concordia Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.\*

*Among the more mundane definitions of 'projection' are these, found in Webster's: 'The calculation of a future possibility; the act of planning or scheming; the act of visualizing an idea or the like as an objective reality.' This is precisely what Goodwin does: her imagery, even the three-dimensional projects executed in solid wood and metal, appear as if they had been conjured up instead of fabricated using material things. She visualizes rather than depicts, and while we may have the momentary impression that some idea ('or the like') is being presented, the form we are looking at is already in transformation, becoming something rather than just being there. The scheming artist is constantly one step ahead of our perception and a few steps ahead or behind of her own vision. Her forms are revisions or previsions, passages instead of fixed venues; they elude interpretation by suggesting a number of possibilities without ever coming to closure. (V. Bogardi, 1986)*

**March 6–29:** *The "Printmakers" / Les "peintres-graveurs,"* Galerie Diana Archibald Inc., Montreal, Quebec.

**June 7–21:** *New Works: David Craven, Betty Goodwin, Gordon Voisey*, Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.

**August 14–16:** Presentation of *Collisions*, a choreographic work by James Kudelka for which Goodwin designed the scenery and costumes in collaboration with Marcel Lemyre. Commissioned by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and shown at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Expo '86.









*this page, top and bottom:*

**Carbon**, 1986

Installation view at Galerie

René Blouin, Montreal

September, 1986

*Photos by Brian Merrett*



*facing page:*

Betty Goodwin with **Triptych**,

1986

*Photo by Charlotte Rosshandler*

Vancouver, British Columbia, and touring to Vienna, Virginia; Montreal, Quebec; and Washington, D.C.

September 27–November 1: Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\* Goodwin inaugurates the newly opened Galerie René Blouin by creating *Carbon*, a major site-specific installation at the gallery, accompanied by a number of smaller related works.

In 1985, *Aurora Borealis* came about with René. He decided he was going to open a gallery and asked me to join. . . . Whenever I have a doubt René comes to the studio and we talk about it. We have an incredible and meaningful rapport. . . . I remember reading something about Francis Bacon saying he never had that kind of dialogue with anyone and that he missed it. René is right here. (III. Bradley interview, March 1998)

*Blouin's gallery seems notable for its strength in women artists. In addition to Goodwin and Cadieux he also represents a Czech-born Montreal artist, Jana Sterbak, who is famous for creating a meat dress fabricated from sewn together steaks. Despite these shockers, it is unquestionably Goodwin who has been vital to the rapid growth of Blouin Gallery and its international visibility.* (X. Giuliano, June–July 1989)

*The installation devised by Betty Goodwin . . . for the Galerie René Blouin was fully accomplished. It also conveyed the concern with experimentation which still abides in this Montreal artist whose career has been so long and tumultuous. . . . To the obsessional quality already present in her works, Goodwin has added a physical space where she can develop and grow.* (• VIII. Bernier, December 1986–February 1987)

*A vision, it would seem, of death by fire rather than death by water, this huge piece represents Goodwin's most overtly Expressionist work to date.* (V. Robert Storr in Yolande Racine, 1987)

October: Goodwin receives the Prix Paul-Émile Borduas from the Quebec government, the province's highest honour accorded to artists. She is the first Anglophone artist to receive this distinction, in recognition of "the great sensitiveness of her art, the exceptional quality of her work, and the surprising vitality of her creation, especially these last twenty years."

That meant a lot to me, particularly in this province. It was a great joy. I was happy to realize that people were not concerned with the fact that I was Jewish or a woman, but that I was being



*above:*

Betty Goodwin working in Saint-Laurent studio, 1986

*Photo by Brian Merrett*

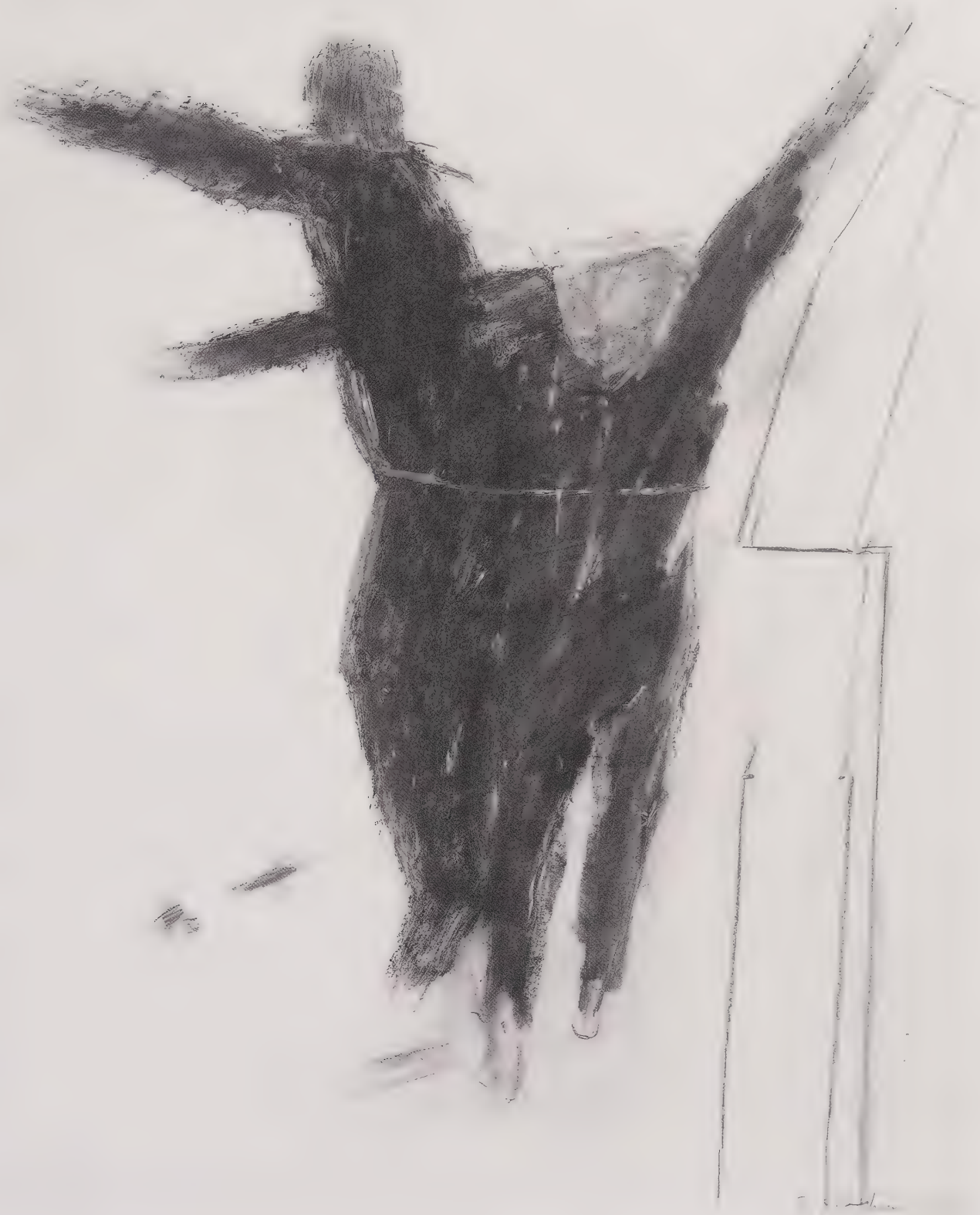
*facing page:*

**Study After Carbon, 1986**

Charcoal powder, wax, oil pastel, pastel and graphite on mylar

54.4 × 43.5

*Art Gallery of Ontario*







rewarded for my work. I find it very stimulating to live in such a place. (• IV. Biron, 1988)

**October 21–January 5, 1987:** *Betty Goodwin, Prix Borduas 1986 : Œuvres de la collection permanente*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.\*

**November 13–19:** *Focus: Kanadische Kunst 1960–1985*, Art Cologne: 20th International Art Fair, Cologne, F. R. Germany (Shelagh Alexander, Roland Brener, Jack Bush, Geneviève Cadieux, Ian Carr-Harris, Robin Collyer, Paterson Ewen, Murray Favro, Robert Fones, Gerald Ferguson, Yves Gaucher, Betty Goodwin, Rodney Graham, Nancy Johnson, Garry Neill Kennedy, Liz Magor, Ron Martin, John Massey, Guido Molinari, Jerry Pethick, David Rabinowitch, Rober Racine, Tony Scherman, Michael Snow, Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace). Catalogue published.

**November 18–December 12:** *La collection Lavalin: Three Artists from Montreal / Trois artistes de Montréal*, Galerie d'art Lavalin, Montreal, Quebec (Ulysse Comtois, Betty Goodwin and Claude Tousignant). Catalogue published.

**November 20–February 15, 1987:** *Graff 1966–1986*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**December–January, 1987:** *Paintings and Drawings from the 1980s*, Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario (David Craven, Betty Goodwin and Harold Klunder).

*Goodwin's five pale, quiet works on paper (1983–1984) are in the back gallery, installed well away from the two smashers out front. The persistent topic of these intimate mixed-media drawings is the rescue of a drowning person, by an angel or by another swimmer. Despite their rather small size and sketchy treatment, these pieces are anything but precious. With notable economy of means—a small wash, a rapid pencil line—Goodwin establishes a moment of danger, crisis and hope, and involves the viewer in that intense diaristic instant.* (VIII. Mays, 18 December 1986)

**December 4–24:** *Installations-Fictions*, Galerie Graff, Montreal, Quebec. Exhibition and launch of a special edition of *La Nouvelle Barre du jour*.

**December 13–January 17, 1987:** *Œuvres excentrées*, Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.

## 1987

It is extremely rare that one can make a strong political statement that is also a true work of art. But

**Figure Lying on a Bench,**

1987

Oil stick, graphite and steel  
bar on mylar

46.7 x 38

*Art Gallery of Ontario*

it's tremendous when it happens, and I think that it's important for women that some of them, like Nancy Spero or Judy Chicago, be capable of doing so. However, it bothers me when women artists are segregated, placed in exhibitions reserved exclusively for women. I think that art should be integrated, and if a woman has something specific to say as a woman and if what she does is a good work of art, then that's marvellous. (• X. Gironnay, May 1987)

**The Goodwins move into their new house on Avenue Coloniale, Montreal. The old pop factory was turned into a studio and home by architect Peter Lanken and renovated by Martin Goodwin.**

I have a great need for solitude. I am very easily distracted. I need to find some place quiet, to have a lot of space around me in order to work. . . . I like that. I am capable of having a relationship with what I carry inside myself, and with what comes out of me. This implies a lot of solitude for me. (• IV. Biron, 1988).

**January 14–February 8:** *Hier . . . Aujourd'hui. Un point de vue sur la gravure*, Galerie 13, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Gilles Daigneault (Yves Gaucher, Betty Goodwin, Raymond Lavoie, Serge Tousignant and Irene Whittome).

**January 20–February 5:** *Une collection*, Galerie d'art du Collège Édouard-Montpetit, Longueuil, Quebec.

**February 4–27:** *"Aurora Borealis": Drawings from Canada*, organized by the Ministry of External Affairs of Canada, shown at The International Monetary Fund Visitors' Centre, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., and in Alaska, California, Ohio and Texas (1987 to 1989) (Geneviève Cadieux, Melvin Charney, Michael Fernandes, General Idea, Betty Goodwin, Noel Harding, John McEwen, Al McWilliams, Claude Mongrain, Rober Racine, Henry Saxe, Michael Snow, Renée Van Halm, Irene Whittome and Krzysztof Wodiczko). Catalogue published.

**March 1–May 24:** *Histoire en quatre temps*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**April 25–May 16:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

**May 2–July 12:** *Betty Goodwin: Œuvres de 1971 à 1987 / Works from 1971 to 1987* opens at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario. The exhibition, curated by Yolande Racine, is organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, and tours to the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia (August 20–October 25), and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec (February 11–April 10, 1988). Catalogue published.\*



Components of this exhibition are then reorganized, with additional material, into a series of exhibitions also curated by Yolande Racine and shown at various venues: *Betty Goodwin: New Work*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, U.S.A. (September 11–November 8); *Betty Goodwin: Works from 1984 to 1987*, 49th Parallel, Centre for Canadian Contemporary Art, New York, U.S.A. (January 9–30, 1988); *Betty Goodwin: Recent Works 1985–1987*, Canada House Cultural Centre Gallery, London, England (May 18–July 1, 1988). Leaflets published.\*

*Unlike her [Quebec] contemporaries, Goodwin chose a different path from the very beginning of her career, which developed slowly and in isolation for a long time. She opted for a figurative aesthetic—sometimes verging on the abstract—a powerfully expressive style rich in intuition and contradictions which found its inspiration in real life and the real world. This unusual response to the polemic of art in the context of the 1960s and 1970s is somewhat similar to the solitary course trod by Michael Snow or Pater-son Ewen at about the same time. (V. Racine, *On View at the New Museum*, 1987)*

*The selection of the pieces in this exhibition reflects the main impulses that have marked the course of Betty Goodwin's career, although the emphasis is on her latest works, those which in turn inspire her current produc-tion. Conceived along the lines of a crescendo, in the sense that recent works are given special importance, this exhibition is more than a survey or retrospective. It is, rather, an approach in which the body of work from 1971 to 1987 appears in all the richness of its paradoxes and its essential continuity. (V. Yolande Racine, 1987)*

*If she has been slow to come to the fore, Betty Goodwin does so now with special authority. Indeed, at the moment when many of the artists prominent in the first half of the decade appear to have been tamed or sated by their success, Goodwin has just hit her stride. To that extent the present exhibition is not a retrospective but a beginning, not a look back but a look forward. (V. Robert Storr in Yolande Racine, 1987)*

*In retrospect, Goodwin's work has been a search for a language to articulate primal emotions and experi-ence. She has now mastered that language, which she uses with poetic imagination and a passionate intensity. What the show demonstrates is that Goodwin is not only a late starter but someone whose art is even now gaining strength. (VIII. James, 1 June 1987)*

*Betty Goodwin's show at the 49th Parallel is like a breath of fresh air. Ms. Goodwin's semiabstract figures have a bracing intensity. Her torturously posed figures are densely worked in a painterly manner, even when she is using pencil or charcoal. In her work you sense a real struggle with the essentials of picture making, and a coming to grips with the kind of spiritual values that you associate with significant art. Here too a case could be made for a certain lack of stylistic originality—for neither her technique nor her imagery is strikingly new. But the sheer intensity of her work reminds us that originality is something that can be found below, as well as on, the surface of things. (VIII. Flam, 22 January 1988)*



*Goodwin's work is clearly and deeply expressionist—not in a sense of fashionable neoexpressionism, but expressionism of a more enduring and fundamental kind. Her œuvre in its entirety does recall the work of others—Jannis Kounellis, Joseph Beuys, Nancy Spero, to name a few—but Goodwin is no acolyte. The originality and power of her art is testimony that she belongs in that company.* (VIII. Glöwen, 10 October 1987)

**May 15–June 28:** *Parcours*, Galerie d'art du Vieux Palais, Saint-Jérôme, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**August 1–November 1:** *Les Cent jours d'art contemporain : Stations*, Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. The section titled “Quatorze Stations” is curated by Roger Bellemare (Marina Abramovic & Ulay, John Baldessari, Georg Baselitz, Louise Bourgeois, Eric Fischl, Leon Golub, Betty Goodwin, John Heward, Marcel Lemyre, Duane Michals, Joseph Felix Müller, Bruce Nauman, Arnulf Rainer and Nancy Spero).

**September:** *The International Art Show for the End of World Hunger*, organized by Artists to End Hunger, exhibited at The Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A., and touring internationally (Arman, Joseph Beuys, Louise Bourgeois, Sandro Chia, Francesco Clemente, Leon Golub, Betty Goodwin, Richard Hamilton, Jörg Immendorff, Per Kirkeby, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Morris, Claes Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, A. R. Penck, Robert Rauschenberg, Gerhard Richter, James Rosenquist, Susan Rothenberg, Andy Warhol, Bill Woodrow and others). Catalogue published.

**September 23–October 25:** *Femmes-Forces*, Musée du Québec, Quebec, Quebec. Catalogue published.

## 1988

**March 5–6:** *Les Femmeuses 88*, Research and Development Building, Pratt & Whitney Canada, Longueuil, Quebec. Catalogue published. Goodwin participates annually in this fundraising event for victims of family violence.

I suppose most people relate my work to religious feeling because there is a great deal of struggle and pain in it. I cannot say that I am an intensely religious person, though I will say that for me the ideal way to live is with deep respect for human beings, which means avoiding violating or otherwise harming anyone. I think there is a great deal of aggression and power in our religions. I am not consciously working towards any spirituality in my work. (V. Morin, 1989)

**Without Cease the Earth**

**Faintly Trembles**, 1988

Mixed media on mylar and sectioned steel bar

193 x 113

*Art Gallery of Ontario*



**March–April:** Goodwin travels to Gent, Belgium, and Berlin, Germany.

**March 26–June 12:** *Signatures*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Gent, Belgium, curated by Norbert de Dauw and Jan Hoet (Richard Artschwager, Joseph Beuys, Michael Biberstein, Karel Dierickx, Jan Fabre, Betty Goodwin, Fritz Klemm, Eugène Leroy, Avis Newman, Jürgen Partenheimer, Remo Salvadori, Franck van den Broeck and John Virtue). Catalogue published.

**April:** Goodwin is awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. She is the only Canadian among ten recipients.

The fact of being Jewish and a woman [has had considerable importance in my work]. This reality, as well as the place I live in, are part of who I am. I don't live in Israel, I'm not a militant feminist. But I am composed of layers, one of which is Jewish and the other female. And I'm sure this comes through. I cannot precisely locate this part of myself in my work, but it is there, at an unconscious level. At the same time, I live in Quebec, in Canada, and I feel that I am from this country; I wouldn't live anywhere else. (• IV. Biron, 1988)

**April 30–June 26:** *Accents de la Collection Lavalin*, organized by Galerie d'art Lavalin, Montreal, Quebec, exhibited at the Musée du Séminaire de Québec, Quebec, Quebec, and at Galerie d'art Lavalin, Montreal, Quebec (July 20–August 26). Catalogue published.

**May 4–June 5:** *Quebec '88: A Selection*, Art Gallery of Ontario Art Rental and Sales Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.

**May 11–July 9:** *Voies intimes / voix intimes : Œuvres choisies dans la collection du Musée du Québec*, Galerie d'art Lavalin, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Roger Bellemare. Catalogue published.

**May 18–August 14:** *L'art au Québec depuis Pellan : Une histoire des prix Borduas*, Musée du Québec, Quebec, Quebec, curated by Gilles Daigneault (Léon Bellefleur, Ulysse Comtois, Julien Hébert, Guido Molinari, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Roland Giguère, Marcelle Ferron, Alfred Pellan, Charles Daudelin, Betty Goodwin and Françoise Sullivan). Catalogue published.

**June 1–September 11:** *Les temps chauds*, organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, and co-ordinated by Gilles Godmer with curators Josée Bélisle, France Gascon, Pierre Landry and Réal Lussier. Exhibited at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, and touring to venues in Toulouse, France; Liège, Belgium; Mons, Belgium; Regina, Saskatchewan; and Calgary, Alberta. Catalogue published.

**June 3–22:** *Art-Paix / Peace-Works*, exhibition and auction of contemporary Canadian works, Salle Tudor, Ogilvy, Montreal, Quebec, organized by René Blouin and Sheila Segal.

**October:** Goodwin travels to Zurich, Bern, Rome, Milan, Turin and Amsterdam.

**October 27–November 19:** *Contemporary Canadian Works on Paper*, Concordia Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Sandra Paikowsky. Catalogue published.

**December 3–30:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

*The recent works on paper in this show, for the most part, are new instances of these old themes and strategies. We know Goodwin: she is the maker of the most beautiful Expressionist drawings since Joseph Beuys—our Cy Twombly, only better in her way; but also our Goodwin, finally unlike anybody else on earth. If the initial surprise of her expressive drawing is over, however, so be it; the work endures. The pitch of her witness to the dolours of passionate existence, her exemplary ironies in the face of mortality—always the important things about her art—are not diminished in these recent drawings, turned out in the steady lope of a mature career. The show must be seen for its great beauty.* (VIII. Mays, 17 December 1988)

I cannot define beauty as something perfect. One finds it in the most unexpected places, and I do not believe that it can have anything in common with prettiness or some such thing. The term ‘beauty’ has been misused to determine what is beautiful. There are all sorts of things which are beautiful and strange; sometimes they are painful, yet beautiful. (• IV. Biron, 1988)

## 1989

*Towards the end of the eighties Goodwin’s work became more directly marked by the apocalyptic scenes of political repression and senseless inhumanity that seemed to be increasing globally. As one who intensely follows all forms of news media, she is acutely aware that the world outside has become the world that resides in each of us. The works she has made in response to a relentless parade of atrocities serve as a means to exorcise these events and images. Still, Goodwin’s artistic purpose has never been to articulate, judge, or order the world around her in ways that make it more comprehensible. Rather, she has been preoccupied throughout her work with the world’s endless complexity and with the impossibility of fully representing its effects in either words or images.* (V. Bradley, 1995)

Yes, I am concerned. It is an ever-present feeling, one that never leaves me. And this feeling also corresponds to my readings and the quotes I choose to highlight. I feel the need to relate things,

to do work on social issues, on the human condition, on the relationships between human beings and the ways in which these relationships sometimes become twisted to the point where they degenerate into horror and meaninglessness. But I don't have the illusion that I can make major changes, or that my work will manage to change people's ways of thinking. I do it, and I do it only because I am confronted with this type of event, just as I am confronted with the misinformation that exists around such events. . . . There is a lot of so-called political art, but I believe that there are few works which combine art and politics in ways that hold together. (• X. Meilleur, October–December 1989)

**March 5–April 2:** *Création / Femmes*, Galerie d'art du Grand Théâtre de Québec, Quebec, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**March 10:** Release of *There Is Plenty of Room*, a documentary on Betty Goodwin directed by Tina Horne and produced by The Montreal New Film Group with the participation of Téléfilm Canada, Sogic, Conseil des Arts du Canada, ONF. Presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec (June); and Cinéma Parallèle, Montreal, Quebec (November 23–26).

**March 25–April 22:** Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

*You'd think that Montreal artist Betty Goodwin might sit back and rest on her past laurels. After all, she has long been considered as one of the true superstars on the Canadian artistic scene, and her international reputation is fast becoming as solid as it is at home. But complacency, safety and conservatism play no part in Goodwin's art, as her current exhibition at the Galerie René Blouin shows. Instead of simply continuing to paint her tortured, angst-ridden figures that always haunt and disturb, Goodwin has recently branched out in a whole new direction. She has started making a series of sculptural wall objects—for want of a better term—out of steel plates with magnetized ferrite objects stuck on to them. The plates have been torched and waxed so that they have subtle, earthy patterns to them. To the ferrite, Goodwin has added metal shavings, nails, tiny strands of wire and a host of other strange and unusual objects. And on most of these works, she has scribbled a wrenching word, saying or a phrase that are as menacing as the materials she is using in this powerful new art. (VIII. Duncan, 15 April 1989)*

**April 16–June 11:** *Figuratively Speaking: Drawings by Seven Artists*, organized by the Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York at Purchase, Purchase, N.Y., U.S.A., curated by Nancy Miller, and touring to Toledo, Ohio, and Kansas City, Missouri. (Magdalena Abakanowicz, Betty Goodwin, Bryan Hunt, A.R. Penck, Mia Westerlund Roosen, Judith Shea and John Walker.) Catalogue published.



*Betty Goodwin has a large reputation for her installations in Canada but is all but unknown in this country. She is the most sculptural of the artists, being as much concerned with space as with the figures that inhabit it. . . . Although the ideas of Joseph Beuys and other innovators have been a major influence, the huge images here look back to the period following World War II, when romantic realists such as Marino Marini held sway. Ms. Goodwin's personae, executed in a mixture of pastel, charcoal and thin washes of delicate pinks, yellows and blues, float upright in water or repose unsupported in thin air while making swimming gestures. In Carbon 1, a head resembling that of Rodin's John the Baptist lies apart from its body, which is a blackened carcass. There is a political undertow in all these drawings: sudden eruptions of black usually stand for harsh words and sometimes toxic air; red refers to blood. This is quiet and rather sinister art. (VIII. Raynor, 14 May 1989)*

**May 9–July 2:** *Betty Goodwin*, Kunstmuseum, Bern, Switzerland. Catalogue published.\*

*The [Room] sculptures, recently executed by the artist, are among the most original and unexpected of all her creations. They take the shape of nearly square steel boxes perched at eye level on tall, thin legs. One side of each box is pierced by a rectangular hole which allows very little light to enter, and which apparently serves to indicate the front of the box. On the other side of the box, a plumbing pipe dangles like an appendage above the floor. These sculptures are strongly anthropomorphic in character: the cut-out rectangle is like a mouth, eye or nostril, while the plumbing pipe is like an ear, arm or shoulder. The legs are . . . like legs. This box is a body, a skull or a house. It encompasses a radical and primordial blackness which light, and hence life, will never be able to penetrate. (• V. Théberge in Kuthy and Théberge, 1989)*

**June 15–September 3:** *L'Histoire et la Mémoire : Acquisitions récentes en art québécois / Recent Acquisitions of Québec Art*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Josée Bélisle. Leaflet published.

**June 27–August 3:** *Montreal on Paper / Montréal sur papier*, Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Peter Krausz. Catalogue published.

**August 19–September 16:** Fundraising exhibition for *Parachute* magazine, Galerie René Blouin and Galerie Chantal Boulanger, Montreal, Quebec.

**September 9–30:** *Steel Notes*, Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

*For all their intimacy, and despite the pain that seems to have motivated them, the steel notes are devoid of the bathos and banality characteristic of a diary. They are impersonal, like all art worthy of the name must be. They speak to us in syllables of metal and traces of color; and what we hear is not the whining and complaining of the self-absorbed diarist, but a solemn, disillusioned poetry, ancient and remote, like*

*that of the Kaddish. . . . The steel notes record Goodwin's physical thoughts about these [pain, love, relationship] matters, but, among all her works, the pieces she calls 'rooms' best embody these thoughts. . . . If these are rooms, they are the corpses of rooms—empty, detached from the house of which they were once a part, isolated, stripped of all function. But Goodwin comes to the tomb and anoints these dead rooms with precious ointments, waxes and oils, symbolizing life—a tender act that accepts death without self-delusion. (VIII. Mays, 16 September 1989)*

**October 14–December 10: Betty Goodwin: Steel Notes.** Betty Goodwin is selected by curator France Morin to represent Canada at the 20th São Paulo International Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil. The exhibition includes works from Goodwin's Interrogation and Steel Notes series. Catalogue published.\*

The words 'Steel Notes' connote for me some kind of note taking, a tough understanding, a tough coping with painful information we get that just seems hopeless. Steel seems to me to have this impenetrable quality, like some of the issues which are so overwhelming and so desperate. I have incorporated quotes by various writers on the 'Steel Notes' that have been in my notebooks for a long time. I found a way to use them to say what I wanted to say. . . . I had wanted to work with magnets for a long time and I see them as a comment on some of the things that are happening in the world. . . . I see the magnets as having an aura of magnetism and also as exerting a tremendous pressure. If you take two magnets and put them close together, the attraction is very powerful. If you put something between them to obstruct their clinging together, then that thing is going to be suffocated. The universe we live in is made up of some very powerful forces and magnetism is one of them. I would also like to work with electricity at some point. The two elements of attraction and pressure worked in very well with some of the ideas I had written down. I also like the idea of presenting them in the context of note taking, like a steel note. (V. Morin, 1989)

When I work with a crayon, I am putting life into it, I am dealing with something inert, whereas if I work with magnets, they already have a force, a power that I have to claim in some way. The magnets I am using are ferrite, they're porous and fragile. If they clap together the edges will chip. From what I know, they come that way. I don't think they are electro-magnetized. They're born that way. (V. Morin, 1989)

**November:** *Prints: A Lasting Impression / La gravure dans tous ses états*, organized by Galerie Graff, centre de conception graphique, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Gilles Daigneault. Leaflet published.

## 1990

That's where the pressure comes—from my own self, not from the outside. And I even hate to say it, but it gets harder, not easier. It gets fuller, richer, but it doesn't get any easier. (VIII. Duncan, 5 May 1990)

**March–April:** *Déplacements : Art actuel 1990*, two-section exhibition shown at the Salle Alfred Pellan, Maison des arts de Laval, Laval, Quebec (March 18–April 15) and Maison de la culture Frontenac, Montreal, Quebec (March 17–April 28). Catalogue published.

**March 14–April 18:** *Sélection d'œuvres de la collection Martineau Walker*, Galerie du Centre, Saint-Lambert, Quebec.

**March 22–April 15:** *Exposition-vente au profit du CIAC*, Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.

**April 27–June 5:** Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

*Three of the works in this remarkable show . . . are of twisted, black chairs that have been painted on gleaming white tiles. In less competent hands, this choice of material alone could seem gimmicky, somewhat contrived. But with Goodwin, these tile 'paintings' conjure up a gut-wrenching sense of torture chambers, inquisition cells, death camps, even hospitals, places of pain that have been designed with clinical precision for an easy clean-up after a bloodletting of some form or another.* (VIII. Duncan, 5 May 1990)

**May:** Goodwin travels to Venice and Florence, Italy, and Paris, France.

**June 1–July 29:** *Goya to Beijing : 1990–1999*, an exhibition commemorating the Chinese students' demonstration at Tiananmen Square, 4 June 1989, is organized by the Canada-China Foundation and curated by Dr. Pei-Yuan Han (Dominique Blain, Erro, Mike Glier, Leon Golub, Betty Goodwin, N. H. Han, Jenny Holzer, Peter Krausz, Ken Lum, Jacques Monory, Antonio Muntadas, Nam June Paik, Bruce Parsons, Wolfgang Petrick, Peter Sorge, Nancy Spero, Jana Sterbak, Krzysztof Wodiczko and Michael Wong). Exhibited at the Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, and the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia (May 4–June 4, 1991).

**Summer:** Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec (Geneviève Cadieux, Catherine Everett, Betty Goodwin and Jana Sterbak).

**September 1–October 28:** *Art contemporain 1990 : Savoir-vivre, savoir-faire, savoir-être*, Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Claude Gosselin (Lothar Baumgarten, Joseph Beuys, Dominique Blain, Domingo Cisneros, Jimmie Durham, Fastwürms, Robert Filliou, Buckminster Fuller, Hamish Fulton, Juan Geuer, Betty Goodwin, Rodney Graham, John Greer, Alfredo Jaar, Francine Larivée, Edward Poitras, Robert Rauschenberg and Lawrence Weiner). Catalogue published.





**September 1–30:** *Betty Goodwin*, Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta, curated by Kitty Scott. Catalogue published.\*

**October 27–November 15:** *Maîtres québécois / Quebec Masters*, Waddington & Gorce Inc., Montreal, Quebec.

**December 9–March 27, 1991:** *Marks*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

## 1991

**March:** Publication of *Black Words*, a collaboration with Denise Desautels, Collectif Génération Plus, Paris, France.

**March 10–30:** *En hommage à un cadeau d'Eva Hesse à Sol Lewitt*, Axe Néo-7, Hull, Quebec, curated by Richard Gagnier. Catalogue published.

**March 16–April 28:** *The Contemporary Drawing: Existence, Passage and the Dream*, The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, U.S.A. Catalogue published.

*The poetically titled exhibition that recently opened at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University is the most ambitious show of its type in the Boston area in recent memory. . . . In Betty Goodwin's large mixed-media drawings of figures in distress, the individual enters a social context. In Porteur, two figures hoist a third on their backs, while a headless fourth figure materializes on the right. Despite their physical intimacy each seems locked in a private world, destined to perpetual misunderstanding and failed connections. The Sisyphean effort required for human communication is summarized in another work's title: Do You Know How Long It Takes for Any One Voice To Reach Another? (VIII. Stapen, 22 March 1991)*

**April 27–May 18:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

*For Goodwin, this decade is shaping up to be one of bearing patient witness, with candour unprecedented in her work, to the damaging emptiness of culture at the end of modernity. In this difficult show, she has presented wise, strong drawing, devoid of exquisiteness, and perhaps richer in dark philosophical feeling than any drawing ever done in this country. (VIII. Mays, 17 May 1991)*

**May 16–September 29:** *Un archipel de désir : Les artistes du Québec et la scène internationale*, Musée du Québec, Quebec, Quebec, curated by Louise Déry (Jocelyne Alloucherie, Dominique Blain, Geneviève Cadieux, Melvin Charney, Sorel Cohen, Charles Gagnon, Yves Gaucher, Raymond Gervais,

## Figure/Animal Series #3.

1990–1991

Tar, graphite, oil stick and charcoal on mylar

219.5 x 171

Art Gallery of Ontario







Betty Goodwin, Michel Goulet, Angela Grauerholz, Geoffrey James, Guido Molinari, Roland Poulin, Rober Racine, Anne Ramsden, Barbara Steinman, Jana Sterbak, Irene Whittome and others). Catalogue published.

**June 1–July 28:** *60 Years, 60 Artists*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia.

**June 7–August 9:** *Œuvres 1965–1991*, Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

**Fall:** Presentation of *La Tentation de la transparence*, a work by Montreal choreographer and dancer Paul-André Fortier, for which Goodwin contributed set designs. Shown during the Festival International de Nouvelle Danse, Montreal, Quebec, and at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec (December 9–13, 1992).

**October 9–31:** *Œuvres sur papier (1969–1975)*, Galerie 67, Quebec, Quebec.\*

**November 2–January 15, 1992:** Espace La Trachefile, Montreal, Quebec.\*

**November 19:** The unveiling of *Triptych*, a work realized by Goodwin as part of the Programme d'intégration des arts à l'architecture of the Quebec government for the new Jean-Noël Desmarais wing of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec.

I developed an interest in the space devoted to the project because it reflects the idea of 'passage', an idea I often dealt with through the years. . . . The nature of the passage gave me the opportunity to use one wall opposite the other as well as the floor to create a 'résonance' between each part. The work is a triptych composed of a bronze spiral-like ear reflected on a shiny aluminum sheet; opposite, is a stylized megaphone of shiny aluminum pierced by two steel corridors or conducts from which a pale blue neon light emanates. Reflections are an important aspect of the installation. Imbedded in the floor are enormous steel letters, readable from each of four levels of the Museum. They read as follows: 'Chaque question possède un pouvoir [que sa réponse ne contient plus]' (Élie Wiesel) and in its French translation 'Do you know how long it takes for any one voice to reach another?' by author Carolyn Forché. I am profoundly interested in the idea of communication between individuals, in the mechanism of perception. (Text for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)

**Marcel Lemyre, Goodwin's assistant and close friend of more than twenty years, dies of AIDS at forty-three. On December 19, Goodwin serves as honorary patron for SIDARTS' Christmas Ball in Montreal, an arts benefit for AIDS.**

Imprint, 1992

Mixed media over silver  
gelatin print on mylar

241.5 x 182

Art Gallery of Ontario

1992

Goodwin begins her *Mémoire du corps* series.

The 'mémoire du corps' series started as an installation during *Aurora Borealis*. The room had a series of ducts that seemed to me like arteries, bones, etc. That was in '85 that I took note of that but it wasn't until recently that I connected with a reason to do the series which would develop into other aspects of the interior of the body—nerves. (Notes for a lecture at University Art Association of Canada conference, 1996)

It's the body's strength but at the same time it's what's left. Now I'm going further inside the body to the nerves. It's a meeting of inside and outside. . . . I'm trying to put it into words. I'll give you an idea just so you'll know. A very close friend of mine died of AIDS and it was just a matter of his disappearing to the point where he was 60 or 70 pounds. That's where it began but then it worked out into other layers. It's not as rigid as that. It's not exactly that. So that's why I can't say it came from this or from that. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

**February:** Goodwin travels to Paris, France.

**March:** Goodwin travels to the Dominican Republic, where she takes photographs that will serve as the basis for her *Nerves* series.

I was somewhere where the ocean had pushed back the land to such an extent that it created a small cliff. On top of the cliff there was a forest. As the trees got very close to the edge you could see all the roots coming down. That's where the nerves came from. I liked the image, blew it up and worked from there. I claimed it for what I needed. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

**End of March:** Goodwin travels to Los Angeles, California.

**March:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario (Melvin Charney, David Craven, Ric Evans, Betty Goodwin, Will Gorlitz and Tony Scherman).

**March–April 26:** *Dialogues*, Centre international d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.

**March 31–May 29:** *Betty Goodwin : Centric 46*, University Art Museum, California State University at Long Beach, Long Beach, California, U.S.A., curated by Diana C. du Pont. Leaflet published.\*

*For an authentic example of an artist who is carrying forward the traditions of Expressionism, one should consult Goodwin's current exhibition at the University Art Museum, California State University, Long*

*Beach. Goodwin displays a group of mixed-media drawings that are refreshing to view in this period of Post-Conceptualism simply because they grapple seriously with issues of drawing technique. This does not mean technique in terms of the sort of pictorial verisimilitude that is taught (or should be) in college drawing classes. Rather, it is the difficult task of finding a way of drawing that makes sense historically now, at the end of the twentieth century. . . . Clearly, Goodwin is serious about extending the traditions of Expressionist art. At 68, she carries a maturity that shows in the depth and resonance of her markmaking, aspects that are sorely lacking in the conspicuous plethora of current media-driven art. (VIII. DiMichele, 21 May 1992)*

**May 29: Goodwin receives an honoris causa doctorate from the Université de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.**

*Let us make no mistake. . . . Betty Goodwin's works are not illustrations of some great humanitarian cause or the simple projection of fine feelings. Their meaning emerges from the material and formal apparatus of the art, which produces its illusions of depth via a hypersensitive surface. A decentred placement on the empty surface can speak to us as much as the folding over of a body. Here someone is drowning in the translucent vellum, while another figure lies carbonized under graphite dust; the sense of fragility exuded by these figures is produced by a particular approach to drawing which makes use of enasures and reworkings, of a sort of quivering line or mark that seems totally oblivious of academic formulae. With Goodwin, the blunt opposition between abstraction and figuration has lost its relevance. Everything comes together on the surface: the frail skin of the figures represented, and the textured surface of the materials transformed by a loving touch. It is we who tremble before this miraculous harmony. (• II. Dubreuil-Blondin, 1992)*

**May 14–August 2: Montréal 1942–1992 : L'anarchie resplendissante de la peinture, Galerie de l'UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Gilles Daigneault. Catalogue published.**

**May 23–July 25: La mémoire du corps, Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\***

*While marred by the odd weak piece, the group of new works by Montreal artist Betty Goodwin now on view at Galerie René Blouin, in her home town, may well be the most subtly involving small show she has ever created. The 13 works here . . . record Goodwin's recent meditations on her enduring, timeless topics: mortality and transience, and the chronic spiritual illness and alienation that is, for many, the experience of daily life itself. . . . Like all her art, these pieces reflect a delicate, vulnerable sensibility, and a way of working that is always more evocative than sensational or explicit. In this show, we find ourselves inside those quiet, tense states that are virtually inexpressible in writing—inside the dull ache of loss, the thick but inexplicable anxiety, the temptations to melancholy's insidious pleasures. (VIII. Mays, 6 June 1992)*

**May 28–April 3, 1994: La Collection : Tableau inaugural, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.**



June: Goodwin travels to Bordeaux, France.

October 1–November 5: *A Decade of Collecting / Une décennie de collection*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

October 15–January 3, 1993: *Une ville, un musée, une collection : Œuvres du Musée de la ville de Lachine*, Musée de la ville de Lachine, Lachine, Quebec. Leaflet published.

October 28–November 29: *Art actuel, présences québécoises*, produced by Galerie Graff, exhibited at the Centre d'art contemporain de la Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, France, and curated by Gilles Daigneault and Gilberte Martin-Méry (Jocelyne Alloucherie, Pierre Ayot, Dominique Blain, Betty Goodwin, Michel Goulet, Peter Krausz, Gilles Mihalcean, Richard Mill, David Moore, Guy Pellerin, Roland Poulin, Monique Régimbald-Zeiber, Louise Robert, Françoise Sullivan and Martha Townsend). Catalogue published.

November 12–December 17: *Sculptures et installations contemporaines d'artistes montréalais : 20<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la Banque d'œuvres d'art du Conseil des arts du Canada*, from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, exhibited at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

November 19–December 19: Galerie Verticale—Charles et Martin Gauthier, Quebec, Quebec.\*

### 1993

January 9–February 9: Fawbush Gallery, New York, U.S.A. (Betty Goodwin, Paula Hays, Rachel Lachewicz, Leone & Macdonald, Anne Mesner, Darwin Nix, Adam Rolston, Kiki Smith, Michelle Stuart and John Wilcox).

January 14–February 21: *Moments choisis*, from the collection of the National Bank of Canada, exhibited at Galerie de l'UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Quebec.

January 15–March 7: *Corpus I*, organized by the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and curated by Bruce Grenville, touring to Banff, Alberta; and Oakville, Ontario (Robin Collyer, Aganetha Dyck, Gathie Falk, Betty Goodwin, Suzy Lake, Liz Magor, Lisa Steele, Theodor Wan, John Watt, Colette Whiten and Irene Whittome). Catalogue published.

January 20–March 15: *Vancouver Collects*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia. Catalogue published.

**February 7–May 16:** *Hear to See II: Looking at Contemporary Art*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

**February:** Goodwin travels to France and visits Paris, Lyon and Nantes.

**March 6–27:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

*The exhibition of smaller mixed-media drawings and sculpture at the Sable-Castelli Gallery this spring was notable for the absence of the familiar. There were no swimmers, chairs or tables. . . . As always in Goodwin's work, we find ourselves in the realm of the dispossessed.* (VIII. Holubizky, Summer 1993)

**March 8–April 17:** *Local Development / Sur la scène locale : L'art de la région de Montréal au 20<sup>e</sup> siècle, œuvres de la collection de l'Université de Montréal*, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Brian Foss. Catalogue published.

**March 30–May 1:** *Betty Goodwin: Cycle 1963–1993*, Ottawa School of Art Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario.\*

**April 17–May 15:** Fawbush Gallery, New York, U.S.A.\*

**May 28:** Goodwin is made an honorary fellow of the Ontario College of Art, Toronto, in acknowledgement of her "uncompromising creativity".

**June 22–September 6:** *Acquisitions récentes, deuxième partie*, Musée de Joliette, Joliette, Quebec.

**September 9–October 30:** *Autour de « Black Arms »*, Centre d'exposition de Rouyn-Noranda, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec.

**September 15–October 17:** *Œuvres choisies de la collection de l'Institut de Québec*, Bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy, Quebec, Quebec.

**September 18–October 16:** *Endangered Species / Le Bestiaire*, espace 502, Belgo Building, Montreal.

**October 1:** Goodwin is awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* by the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

**November:** Goodwin travels to Paris.

**November 11–15:** *Entrée libre à l'art contemporain*, Place Bonaventure, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**November 18–December 23:** Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

*Her fragile, ethereal, half-erased figures are there. But instead of floating as they did in her earlier Swimmers series, Goodwin's latest figures relate to the land. Some hover just above her horizons, others touch the edge of her landscapes, while two other figures—these are the sketchiest and most elusive—are buried beneath the surface. They look like tender layers of strata in some strange, geological cut-away model. . . . Goodwin digs deeply into the darkest recesses of her soul—and by extension our collective spirit—for her art. In so doing, she comes up with a vision that is tough, touching on all our primal fears, but one that is never unrelentingly bleak. Rather, it is cathartic—even liberating—to experience her art as she manages to 'name the unnameable and communicate the unknowable.' And never has she done it better, more profoundly, more forcefully than in her remarkable Nerve series. (VIII. Duncan, 27 March 1993)*

*With her recent work, Betty Goodwin once again succeeds in surprising and astonishing us. The fact that this great seventy-year-old artist constantly manages to discover new ways of making art is in itself a rare phenomenon in our society. Gilles Daigneault recently (and rightly) pointed out . . . that Goodwin's age and reputation could easily entitle her to a place in our art history alongside those occupied by Borduas and Pellán—the difference being that Goodwin is still 'making history.' Moreover, one need only look at the swarm of artists dipping into this iconography of the body and these rough (yet sensitive and tragic) poses to realize her enormous influence on the new generation. And this influence seems far from being exhausted. (• VII. Hakim, 18–19 December 1993)*

## 1994

**February 27–April 18:** *L'estampe, un art à découvrir*, Musée d'art de Joliette, Joliette, Quebec.

**March 1–April 2:** *Imprimatur*, three-section exhibition curated by Gilles Daigneault and Madeleine Forcier, exhibited at Galerie Graff, Montreal, Quebec; Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec; and Galerie de l'UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**March 2–6:** Montreal choreographer and dancer Paul-André Fortier creates *Bras de plomb* after the stage set designed by Goodwin, performed at L'Agora de la danse, Montreal, Quebec.

*When we meet, Betty and I, we look at each other more than we talk. We're very economical with words. The work we do, it's not evident, it's not easy. Ideas and concepts are so, how do you say in English,*



fugitifs, so fleeting, I don't know how many artists I could work with and not risk damaging the ideas. But with Betty, I take a lot of courage. (X. Paul-André Fortier in Scott, 19 January 1995)

**March 5-May 15:** *Betty Goodwin : Peintures, dessins, sculptures, scénographies* is presented at the Centre d'art contemporain de la Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, France. Catalogue published.\*

*Today, thanks to the initiative of Chantal Cusin-Berche and the Ferme du Buisson, we can discover the work of Betty Goodwin, who is one of Canada's greatest artists. And we are astonished to learn that this is her first one-person show in France. . . . This exhibition brings together her recent works: an installation, several sculptures (in particular, two Steel Rooms, which serve as fascinating metaphors for buried memories, reclusion, the turning inward upon oneself), the components of a remarkable set for the choreographer Paul-André Fortier, and especially paintings and drawings, including the Mémoire du corps and the Nerves series. (• VIII. Jover, May 1994)*

**March 13-May 1:** *Œuvres choisies de la collection de dessins et estampes du Musée du Québec*, Musée régional de Rimouski, Rimouski, Quebec.

**March 23-28:** *SAGA, Salon de l'estampe et de l'édition d'art à tirage limité moderne et contemporain*, Parc des expositions de Paris, Porte de Versailles, Paris, France.

**March 27-April 24:** *De causis et tractatibus: Encyclopédie en 47 livres d'artistes*, Axe Néo-7, Hull, Quebec.

**April 30-October 23:** *Shared Vision: The Lavalin Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal / La Collection Lavalin du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal : Le Partage d'une vision*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**September 10-24:** *Melvin Charney, Betty Goodwin, Tony Scherman*, Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto.

**November-December 4:** *La Banque d'œuvres d'art sur le vif à Québec*, from the collection of The Canada Council Art Bank, exhibited in Salle C2 of the Palais Montcalm, Quebec, Quebec.

## 1995

The working process is a non-verbal battle. . . . Things can happen to a drawing if you take the risk of wiping into it, which is also drawing. You wipe it off and out of a frenzy of despair, you start again and very often it is at those times that something will come that you really did not plan on. Something inherent in the process takes over and returns something to you. (VI. Basha, 1995)

**February 2–March 5:** *Moments choisis*, from the collection of the National Bank of Canada, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Ontario.

**February 4–March 11:** *Sarah Stevenson, Betty Goodwin*, Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.

**March 4–April 1:** Galerie Éric Devlin, Montreal, Quebec.

**April 15–May 13:** Fawbush Gallery, New York, U.S.A.\*

*In a dozen recent works, Betty Goodwin, an artist in her early 70s who is much admired in Canadian art circles, demonstrated the range of her talents. . . . Goodwin's vision of the body as the vehicle through which we sense the world is conveyed in an intensely focused and very personal manner. Her bodies are both vulnerable and enduring, the locus of an existential reconciliation between mind, spirit and matter. Unsentimental and quirky, her art is quietly, discreetly moving.* (VIII. Wei, January 1996)

**April 28–October 29:** *Dons 1989–1994*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. Catalogue published.

**May:** Goodwin receives the Gershon Iskowitz Prize, one of Canada's most prestigious awards for the visual arts. Of her work, jury members Jessica Bradley, Roald Nasgaard and Margaret Priest said: *One feels very strongly the sensuality of the materials, the presence of the artist's hand. Betty Goodwin allows the language of drawing to work; she has given an entire generation, on whom she has an enormous effect, permission to draw.* (X. Duncan, 11 May 1995)

**May 13–June 3:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

**June–October 15:** Goodwin is included in the much praised *Identity and Alterity* exhibition at the Venice Biennale ("Section VIII: The Real and Virtual Body 1895–1995") curated by Jean Clair. Catalogue published. After visiting Venice, Goodwin travels to Amsterdam and London.

*In Venice she shared space with artists as different as Marlene Dumas and Eric Fischl, Cindy Sherman and Arnulf Rainer, Jeanne Dunning and Rudolf Schwarzkogler. All of these artists have investigated in various ways the separate territories occupied by the body—the erotic, psychic, mythic, theatrical and the self-destructive—but none have so consistently and movingly traced the body's fragile negotiations between being and not being, between presence and absence, between marking and erasing, and between hope and despair.* (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

**Summer:** *Traces de la danse*, Musée de Joliette, Joliette, Quebec.

**October 19–29:** *Perspective de l'art actuel au Québec*, Casa Lamm Cultural Centre, Mexico, Mexico.

**October 27–January 7, 1996:** *Betty Goodwin: Signs of Life / Signes de vie*, curated by Jessica Bradley for the Art Gallery of Windsor and the National Gallery of Canada, presents Goodwin's work of the early 1990s. The exhibition travels to the National Gallery of Canada (February 22–May 12, 1996). Catalogue published.\*

I'm having an exhibition at the National Gallery that Jessica Bradley is curating and she was going through a lot of the work in the drawers all the way up to what I'm doing now. She did something I could never have done; she put various works together in groups. In the end I found it very disturbing. . . . It was just like peeling off layers. It made everything too conscious for me. At the same time the connections she found were amazing. (X. Enright, Fall 1995)

*While certain drawings are admirable and truly the best the artist has to offer, this exhibition clearly demonstrates that Betty Goodwin is not entirely comfortable with sculpture. Her constructions are static and, unlike the drawings, literal. . . . One could also quibble about the addition of certain objects to the drawings; these betray the artist's unjustified insecurity over her drawing, since they do not add to the works' meaning. These reservations aside, this is a successful and perfectly balanced exhibition that once again confirms the great sensibility of Betty Goodwin.* (• VIII. Aquin, 4–10 April 1996)

**November 3–January 28, 1996:** *Betty Goodwin: Icons*, organized by the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan, curated by Cindy Richmond and touring to the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba (October 6, 1996–January 2, 1997). Catalogue published.\*

*Since the late sixties when Goodwin began to concentrate on drawing and etching, she has consistently produced large groups of small drawings. . . . These drawings are less spectacular in scale than the larger works and, consequently, they have received much less attention. Nonetheless, they are fully conceived and executed works of art in their own right. The small drawings are a crucial part of Goodwin's creative process, but they are in no sense 'studies' for the larger works.* (V. Richmond, 1996)

*In this brilliant exhibition of drawings by Betty Goodwin, we are provided with an evocative reminder of the grace, beauty and fragility of the human form.* (VIII. Beatty, 30 December 1995)

**December 7–January 19, 1996:** *Diary of a Human Hand*, Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Régine Basha (Betty Goodwin, Brice Marden, Agnes Martin and Susan Rothenberg). Catalogue published.

*I have selected Betty Goodwin's work, precisely because it has often been examined allegorically—on a*

*page 162:*

**The Pulse of a Room**, 1995

Installation view from the

exhibition *Signs of Life*

*Courtesy National Gallery of  
Canada*

*page 163:*

**Pieces of Time, 1963–1995**

Installation view, Jack Shain-

man Gallery, New York, 1998

*Photo courtesy Jack Shainman  
Gallery, New York*







'universal' level—and not autographically. Looking at the countless journals she has filled over the years, it becomes apparent that the nature of her images—their precarious existence—is derived of the relationship Goodwin has with her drawing process. In other words, the image may be seen as a metaphor of drawing, and her grappling with it. (VI. Basha, 1995)

## 1996

**January 17–May 26:** *L'art québécois de l'estampe 1945–1990*, Musée du Québec, Quebec, Quebec, curated by Michèle Grandbois. Catalogue published.

**May:** The Art Gallery of Ontario announces Goodwin's major gift of 150 works and the purchase of eighteen more works through funds provided by the gallery's Volunteer Committee in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary. It is the largest single acquisition of contemporary art in the institution's history, establishing the largest holdings of Goodwin's work in a public collection.

Jessica Bradley, the AGO's curator of contemporary art, called Goodwin's contribution to the 'art of drawing' her major accomplishment. 'Her totally innovative approach to drawing is a central activity rather than a peripheral one.' Bradley helped select many of Goodwin's pieces from the artist's Montreal studio. 'The place is charged with her life, her memories and objects she's collected. From tables full of scrap metal to photos saved from magazines. I found wonderful, small, intimate works that she'd completely forgotten about.' (X. Gray, 28 May 1996)

**September 13–October 27:** *Objet-Dessin*, Galerie d'art et Hall du Pavillon central de l'Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Quebec, curated by Laurier Lacroix (Betty Goodwin, Paul Lacroix, Renée Lavaillante, Roland Poulin and Irene Whittome).

**September 27–November 9:** *Pieces of Time*, Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

The series of drawings in the exhibition starting this Friday, all of which are from 1996, is vintage stuff. The Goodwin stamp is on everything: the floating bodies with their elongated limbs, the vaguely uterine and sometimes blueish colours and, last of all, her ever-present fondness for the human condition, which is here stronger than ever. Titled *Pieces of Time*, these drawings depict bodies sucked into or expelled from large spiral labyrinths, in what appears to be an obvious metaphor of birth and death—which come to the same thing, depending on one's point of view. (• VIII. Aquin, 26 September–2 October 1996)

**October 18–January 5, 1997:** *L'Oeil du collectionneur*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, curated by Paulette Gagnon and Yolande Racine. Catalogue published.



**November 7–January 5, 1997:** *Reflections of the Soul: Contemporary Canadian Art*, Art Gallery of North York, North York, Ontario (Stephen Andrews, Lorene Bourgeois, Geneviève Cadieux, Ivan Eyre, Betty Goodwin, Micah Lexier, Arnaud Maggs, Al McWilliams, Evan Penny, Taras Polataiko and Roland Poulin).

**November 22–January 12, 1997:** *L'Écart*, Centre d'art contemporain de la Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, France (Jean Degottex, Betty Goodwin, Rebecca Horn, Sarkis, Jana Sterbak and Sarah Stevenson). Catalogue published.

**November:** Goodwin travels to Paris and London.

**November 28–January 18, 1997:** Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, England.\*

## **1 9 9 7**

**March 14–April 5:** *Présences*, Galerie de l'UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, Quebec. (Presented as part of *Œuvres vives : La création des femmes en arts visuels*.)

**March–May:** *La collection d'œuvres d'art de la Banque nationale du Canada*, Domaine Cataraqui, Sainte-Foy, Quebec.

**June 8:** Goodwin is awarded the degree of Doctor of Humanities honoris causa by the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, "for her courage, for her inestimable artistic sensibility and achievement, [and] for her example of the truth-telling life."

**November 1–22 :** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

## **1 9 9 8**

**April 18–May 16:** Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, U.S.A.\* The exhibition includes works from 1963 to 1995.

**September 19–October 24:** Galerie René Blouin, Montreal, Quebec.\*

**November 14–December 19:** Sable-Castelli Gallery, Toronto, Ontario.\*

**November 18–March 7, 1999:** *The Art of Betty Goodwin*, curated by Jessica Bradley and Matthew Teitelbaum, is presented at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario.\*

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*Compiled by Anne-Marie Ninacs*

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